

October 2017

RAISING THE BARRE & STRETCHING THE CANVAS

IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY ARTS PROGRAMMING
IN A NATIONAL YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATION

COMMISSIONED BY THE WALLACE FOUNDATION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Research shows that involvement in the arts promotes positive youth development, yet far too few children from low-income homes have access to high-quality arts education. These children are about half as likely to participate in arts programs as youth from more affluent families,¹ and when they do, they are typically encouraged to make crafts rather than create unique work or develop formative artistic skills.²



As part of an ongoing, multimillion-dollar Wallace Foundation initiative to improve and expand arts learning opportunities for young people, the Foundation, in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), developed the Youth Arts Initiative (YAI) to deliver otherwise inaccessible high-quality arts programs to low-income urban tweens in an after-school setting. With funding from the Wallace Foundation, BGCA launched a YAI pilot in February 2014 to see if a multidisciplinary Youth Serving Organization (YSO), working with a small number of its affiliates, could implement a high-quality art skill-development program modeled after out-of-school time programs focused primarily on the arts.

YAI is shaped by a multi-year study of teen arts engagement called *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts*.³ *Something to Say* identified Ten Principles for Success in high-quality arts programs, drawn from interviews with more than 200 teens and their families as well as directors of arts-specific out-of-school time programs, researchers, and other art education authorities. The Ten Principles for Success include practices identified as important for quality after-school art skill-development programs (the first five Principles) as well as core tenets of high-quality youth development (the last five Principles). Table ES-1 lists the Ten Principles.

The Principles for Success were partially based on the experiences of successful art-focused organizations and not multidisciplinary YSOs, like Boys & Girls Clubs, who are typically less accustomed to delivering high-quality art skill-development programming. Both types of organizations want youth to thrive socially, emotionally, and cognitively, and both have youth development at their core. But they also differ in significant ways. Among these differences are:

- **Breadth vs. depth:** Clubs provide multiple programs for participants to explore, while arts-focused organizations seek holistic youth development through the arts.

¹National Endowment for the Arts, 2011 Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Arts Participation & A 2009 Census Bureau survey (A Child's Day 2009).

²Denise Montgomery, Peter Rogovin, and Neromanie Persaud, "Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts." The Wallace Foundation, 2013: 11.

³The study was conducted by Next Level Strategic Marketing Group and included data from best practice arts organizations, tweens with moderate and high engagement in the arts, and field experts.

TABLE ES-1

THE TEN PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS

PRINCIPLE N° 1

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICING ARTISTS

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

Instructors are professional, practicing artists, and are valued with compensation for their expertise and investment in their professional development.

PRINCIPLE N° 2

EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

Executive directors have a public commitment to high-quality arts programs that is supported by sustained action.

PRINCIPLE N° 3

DEDICATED SPACES

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

Arts programs take place in dedicated, inspiring, welcoming spaces and affirm the value of art and artists.

PRINCIPLE N° 4

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

There is a culture of high expectations, respect for creative expression and affirmation of youth participants as artists.

PRINCIPLE N° 5

CULMINATING EVENTS

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROGRAM QUALITY:

EXTERNAL VISIBILITY, SUPPORT, AND RECOGNITION
Programs culminate in high-quality public events with real audiences.

PRINCIPLE N° 6

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROGRAM QUALITY:

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
Positive relationships with adult mentors and peers foster a sense of belonging and acceptance.

PRINCIPLE N° 7

YOUTH INPUT

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROGRAM QUALITY:

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
Youth participants actively shape programs and assume meaningful leadership roles.

PRINCIPLE N° 8

HANDS-ON SKILL BUILDING

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROGRAM QUALITY:

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
Programs focus on hands-on skill building using current equipment and technology.

PRINCIPLE N° 9

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROGRAM QUALITY:

EXTERNAL VISIBILITY, SUPPORT, AND RECOGNITION
Programs strategically engage key stakeholders to create a network of support for both youth participants and programs.

PRINCIPLE N° 10

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL SAFETY

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROGRAM QUALITY:

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
Programs provide a physically and emotionally safe place for youth.

- **Open-access vs. selective participation:** In Clubs, all participation is voluntary, and Clubs rarely turn away participants. Community arts-focused programs frequently restrict enrollment to cohesive cohorts, and attendance can be mandatory.
- **Generalists vs. specialists:** Clubs are staffed by youth development workers who are generalists, work in many program areas, and are frequently part-time. Given the Clubs' funding environment, these youth development staff often receive low wages. In contrast, community arts organizations are staffed by professional artists who are compensated at rates that acknowledge their expertise.
- **Tweens vs. teens:** The successful community arts organizations profiled in *Something to Say* serve teens. YAI, on the other hand, was designed to serve tweens.

In summary, the goal of YAI was to find out if BGCA could implement a high-quality art skill-development program—and to learn if YSOs are a viable avenue to increase access to, equity of, and quality in arts education for low-income urban youth. The evaluation of the pilot, the focus of this report, was designed to answer the fundamental question: Is it possible for high-quality after-school art skill-development programs to be incorporated into a multidisciplinary youth serving organization? If so, how?

The answer is yes, it is possible, and this report provides details about the challenges and successes of implementing YAI in a YSO using data from the first two-and-a-quarter years of the program's implementation. The findings presented in this report are derived primarily from qualitative data drawn from interviews with YAI and Club staff and leadership. Other data sources include participant focus group and survey data, participant attendance and background data, and parent focus group data.

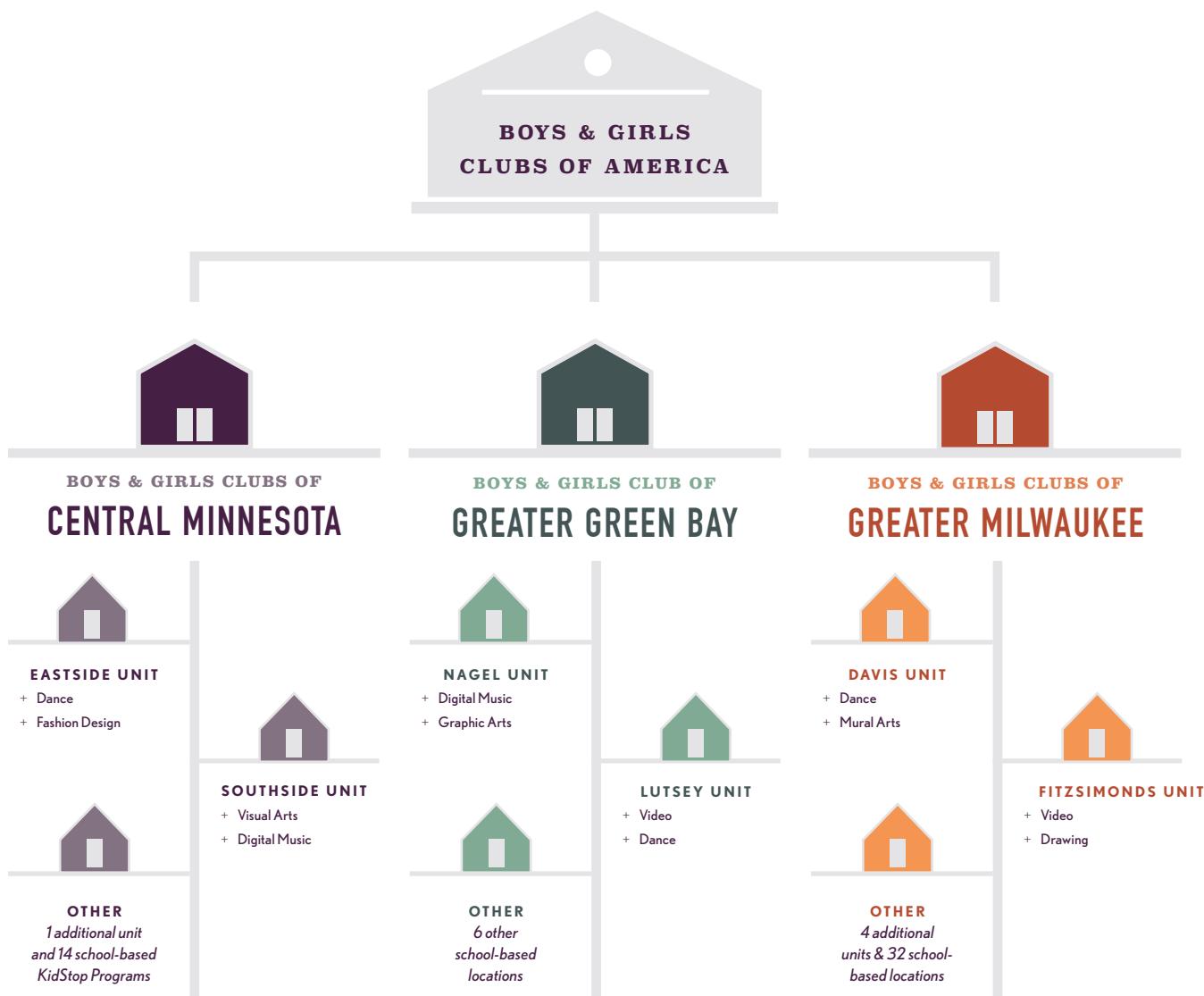
BACKGROUND

The Wallace Foundation provided BGCA with funding to implement YAI, and BGCA used these funds to experiment with their approach, develop tools, assess the progress of the program, and create a platform for cross-organizational learning. They also selected three affiliate Clubs to test YAI. Each Club received a substantial subgrant from BGCA to develop studio-quality art spaces, purchase up-to-date, professional level equipment for each art form, and hire professional teaching artists. Each of the three Clubs selected two units to implement YAI, and each unit offered two art forms. Figure ES-1 identifies the Clubs and the art forms they implemented.

YAI incorporates two different types of classes: skill-development and exposure. Skill-development classes teach youth artistic skills. Exposure classes, on the other hand, are designed for participants with an interest in the art form who are not ready or able to commit to the skill-development classes. The goal of these classes, which were typically held once a week, was to provide youth with the opportunity to experience the art form.

FIGURE ES-1

STRUCTURE OF YAI PILOT, INCLUDING ART FORMS



Skill-development classes differed the most from existing Club arts programs. Typically, they enrolled 8-18 students and were offered in sessions throughout the year. Classes were held several times a week for 1-2 hours with the explicit goal of building skills specific to the art form, such as:

- Demonstrating competence and confidence in performing a variety of dance moves and how to effectively communicate intent or meaning through movement;
- Understanding of basic design and color principles and ability to demonstrate the use of basic tools, techniques, and processes, including paints and surfaces; and
- Demonstrating competence and confidence in sewing, including use of a sewing machine and other tools, use of patterns, and hand-sewing techniques.

Regular attendance was expected in skill-development classes. Participants needed to arrive in time to change their clothes, set up materials, stretch, or prepare equipment. In skill-development classes, teaching artists implemented the Ten Principles by working towards a culminating event, building skills through instruction and review, using proper art terms, teaching about the process of creating art, and teaching participants to create original work. Every class had a strict code of conduct that codified expectations and promoted physical and emotional safety. By the end of the study period, most art forms offered customized skill-development classes to accommodate youth of different ages (10-12 and 13-14), skill levels (beginner to advanced), and interests (hip hop or ballet, drawing or painting).

A total of 929 tweens participated in YAI over the study period: the majority were younger tweens (11 or younger), African-American or Latino, female, and low income. Some had little arts experience before YAI.

FINDINGS

Cross-Cutting Lessons

During YAI's implementation, four cross-cutting lessons emerged:

LESSON 1: A YSO that is not primarily focused on the arts can implement a high-quality art skill-development program. Our research indicates that BGCA and its pilot affiliate Clubs did, in fact, successfully implement high-quality art skill-development programs as defined by the Ten Principles for Success. The Clubs hired professional teaching artists, developed near studio-quality spaces, taught classes using near professional-quality equipment, and held public art performances, events, and shows. Surveys reveal that tweens experienced the seven Principles directly applicable to programming in their skill-development classes.⁴

⁴ Seven of the ten Principles (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10) are directly applied in YAI classes and were assessed through student surveys and focus groups. The two Principles that apply to the overall organizational culture and structure that supports the program (2 and 9) were assessed by staff surveys and interviews. Data on the remaining Principle, Culminating Events, was assessed through forms that were completed by YAI staff at the conclusion of each event.

FIGURE ES-2

TWEEN PARTICIPANTS' REPORTS OF EXPERIENCING A SUBSET OF THE TEN PRINCIPLES IN YAI CLASSES



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Additionally, YAI and Club staff reported in a survey that the other Principles (e.g., Executive commitment, Culminating events, and Community engagement) were being implemented. For instance:

- Principle 2 (Executive commitment): One hundred percent of teaching artists and YAI liaisons (who supervised the teaching artists and managed the YAI initiative at the Club level) reported that Club leadership had advocated for YAI over the six months prior to the survey. Eighty-seven percent also reported that Club leaders participated in YAI activities—which emerged as one of several successful strategies for integrating YAI into the Clubs.

- Principle 9 (Community engagement): All three Clubs had partnered with community organizations by the close of the research period. Survey data demonstrated that in Spring 2016, YAI teaching artists, liaisons, and leaders had formed partnerships with five types of partners.
- Principle 5 (Culminating events): Every skill-development class held culminating events, many of them public, by Spring 2016. From 2015 to Spring 2016, YAI held nine culminating events open to the general public.

These reports were corroborated by qualitative data from staff and participants, as well as program observations. YAI served more than 900 youth, and from them emerged a core group of committed participants who reported learning artistic skills and having positive experiences unique to the program. Program observations, staff and parent interviews, and participant focus groups revealed that the majority of participants were very enthusiastic and engaged in their YAI classes. Club staff members who were not involved in YAI said:

Kids love it. [...] When YAI starts, they run to that room and just sit outside the door until she opens it and they can go in and start.

The kids value [the YAI program] more than any other program, and the dedication shows. They are here all the time; they never miss a session.

Many parents confirmed that their tweens were practicing the art form and talking about their classes at home. One mother said:

[My daughter] did fashion design, and she was really immersed in it. There are times where I can't find her, and I'll holler, "Where are you?" And she says, "I'm downstairs sewing." She set up her own sewing thing. She uses my sewing machine more than I do—she designs everything from Barbie to American Girl doll things for herself.

In addition, YAI participants increased their Club participation at an age when out-of-school time program participation often begins to decline.⁵

While the Ten Principles were successfully implemented in a YSO, the successes came with costs and complications discussed in the remaining cross-cutting findings below.

⁵ Amy Arbreton, Molly Bradshaw, Jessica Sheldon, and Sarah Pepper. "Making Every Day Count: Boys & Girls Clubs' Role in Promoting Positive Outcomes for Teens." Public Private Ventures, 2009; Sipe, Cynthia L. and Patricia Ma (1998). Support for Youth: A Profile of Three Communities. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures; American Youth Policy Forum (2006). Helping Youth Succeed Through Out of School Time Programs. Washington, DC.: American Youth Policy Forum.

LESSON 2: All of the Principles were important to the success of YAI in a YSO: Some led the transformative change within the Clubs needed to implement the Ten Principles, and others served as building blocks of arts-program quality. Established Club culture clashed with the requirements of the “Transformative” Principles (1, 2, 3, and 4) and implementation required significant shifts in either the Club’s operations or to the Principle itself. Clubs had to look for ways to adapt these Principles, as well as their own beliefs and approaches, to reduce tensions that arose from their implementation. For example, Principle 4 (High expectations) caused tension, as the Clubs’ safe haven, drop-in culture conflicted with the level of routine engagement required for high-quality art skill development. Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists) required Clubs to hire professionals, not generalists; pay them more than most other frontline staff members; and allow them more autonomy and flexibility than other Club staff. All the Clubs had existing arts programming in place; in some cases, the hiring of a professional teaching artist created tension with existing arts teachers. In some cases, the Clubs also had to adapt these Principles to make them work in a Club setting. For instance, Principle 2 (executive commitment) calls for a deeply-engaged Executive Director; however, since Club leadership was multi-tiered, success required the buy-in of the entire leadership team. Further, the Executive Directors could not focus solely on YAI because they were responsible for multiple program areas, all with vested stakeholders. These Transformative Principles had to be established before programming began.

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The remaining six Principles served as “Essential Building Blocks of Quality” and required Clubs to expand existing youth development practices. Clubs did not experience push-back regarding these Principles; however, they required the Clubs to think more expansively. Clubs did not question how these Principles aligned with their practices and culture, but they were still challenged to implement them to a greater degree. For example, Clubs already knew that allowing tweens and teens a voice and choice increased their engagement, and therefore used youth input (Principle 7) as a key youth development practice. Clubs routinely asked youth about their interests, then used available resources to develop relevant programs. In YAI, Clubs were expected to expand these practices to include youth input on the design and day-to-day programming of the initiative. As a result, youth provided input on the chosen art form, the design of the YAI spaces, and the hiring of teaching artists. This led some Clubs to adopt more youth-inclusive hiring processes beyond YAI. Essential Building Block Principles began to be implemented once programming began. Four of these Principles (Youth input, Positive adult-youth and peer relationships, Hands-on skill building, and Physical and emotional safety) were critical for youth engagement in YAI. Two of these Principles, Culminating events and Community engagement, were not fully implemented until programming had matured; their main function was to build external visibility, support, and recognition for YAI and its participants.

LESSON 3: The infusion of resources to YAI created tensions in the Clubs but also expanded their visions of quality. Funds for YAI, provided by the Wallace Foundation, allowed the Clubs—accustomed to operating under tighter financial constraints—to create and implement high-quality, well-funded arts programming. This infusion of resources caused tension with other Club programs and frontline staff. YAI’s resources paid for professional teaching artists, new technology and equipment, and customized, renovated, dedicated space—luxuries that other Club staff members and leaders wished they could have.

However, this tension resolved when Clubs and leaders saw the benefit of the Ten Principles in action and acknowledged the value of professional frontline content experts, ample and updated equipment and supplies, and dedicated, youth-friendly space. In fact, by the end of the pilot period, leaders and staff in all three Clubs had considered the potential impact of infusing the Ten Principles more broadly into their programming.

LESSON 4: BGCA supported the implementation of the Ten Principles and helped staff understand how YAI was different from “business as usual” in the Clubs. BGCA’s role in the pilot was critical, as many of the Ten Principles were superficially similar to existing Club practices but in fact quite different. For instance, Principles 5 through 10 are universally relevant youth development principles, yet even those proved to be different from typical Club practices. BGCA helped Clubs implement the Ten Principles according to the required timeline by offering significant support in every aspect of the initiative. This relationship kept Clubs focused as they expanded their existing practices, explored new systems, and resolved tensions that arose during implementation.

Application and Adaptation of The Ten Principles

The report describes implementation of each of the Ten Principles in a YSO, the adaptations required, and strategies identified to address tensions. The “at a glance” tables on the following pages are organized by the main role of the Principle in the initiative: Transformative Principles, Participant Engagement Principles, and External Visibility, Support, and Recognition Principles. They provide information about each Principle’s specific function in the initiative and the key adaptations needed to make the Principle work in a YSO setting. The Principles are organized in the order of their implementation.

TABLE ES-3

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLES: FUNCTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS AT A GLANCE

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE IN THE CLUB	FUNCTION	ADAPTATIONS
PRINCIPLE N° 2 EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT	Multi-tiered leadership that involves both internal and external arts advocacy.	Human capital that creates the organizational foundation for high-quality arts by integrating the initiative into the Club and ensuring that the Ten Principles were implemented well.	Principle 2 was adapted to include leadership at all levels of the Club, not just the Executive Director. Principle 2 was adapted to acknowledge that leadership could not exclusively focus on the arts. Clubs modified supervisory and reporting structures so that the professional artists reported to the YAI liaison rather than the Unit Director like other Club staff.
PRINCIPLE N° 1 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICING ARTISTS	Instructors are professional artists with strong youth-development skills who are adequately compensated for their expertise.	Human capital that creates the programmatic foundation for YAI and ensured integration and visibility of YAI in the Club.	Clubs treated artists differently than typical Club staff—increasing pay scales, tightening hiring, allowing flexible working hours, and reducing the number of “regular Club duties” artists were required to take on in lieu of more programmatically-demanding YAI responsibilities. Professional teaching artists had to brand YAI work as a Club product. Principle 1 was adapted to incorporate an equal focus on youth development skills and artistic skills among teaching artists and to set more limited expectations for teaching artists’ continued professional work outside of YAI.
PRINCIPLE N° 4 HIGH EXPECTATIONS	Almost professional-level infrastructure. Programs focused on skill development and original artwork; expectations for regular participant attendance and professional behavior in the program.	Requiring all aspects of arts programming to reflect high standards—an expectation of quality for youth and from youth.	Clubs, which often operate in a resource-constrained environment, had to manage expectations for access to the professional-level infrastructure afforded by YAI. Clubs changed program scheduling to address conflicting program offerings and accommodate YAI’s attendance requirements. Principle 4 was adapted to allow artists to temper expectations for beginners and focus on youth engagement to encourage committed participation in a setting where other program options don’t require an attendance commitment.
PRINCIPLE N° 3 DEDICATED SPACES	Repurposed Club spaces designed to be professional, welcoming and dedicated art studios, ideally designed by teaching artists and with youth input.	Visible manifestation of commitment to quality and the arts which served to engage youth, Club leaders and community stakeholders in the program, create a sense of pride, and provide facilities necessary to practice the art form.	Clubs adapted to the notion of dedicated spaces for arts programs by allowing these spaces to go unused, even when programming was not in session. This was in contrast to their typical multi-purpose space practices. Clubs re-located other programs to make space for YAI. Principle 3 was adapted to acknowledge limitations of Club spaces, resulting in not-quite-studio-quality art spaces.

TABLE ES-4

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF QUALITY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FUNCTION AND EXPANSIONS AT A GLANCE

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE IN THE CLUB	FUNCTION	EXPANSIONS
PRINCIPLE N° 6 POSITIVE ADULT-YOUTH AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS	<p>Strong, strategically-supported relationships between adults and youth developed within and outside of the program.</p> <p>Safe, collaborative peer relationships in YAI classes.</p>	<p>Engaging and retaining youth in the program through creating a sense of belonging.</p>	<p>Clubs supported positive relationship development in YAI.</p> <p>However, YAI youth at times reported more positive relationships with YAI staff than other Club staff.</p>
PRINCIPLE N° 7 YOUTH INPUT	<p>Youth input solicited at all stages. Youth leadership opportunities emerged as the initiative matured.</p>	<p>Engaging and retaining youth in the program through aligning activities with youth interests and culture.</p>	<p>YAI expanded the Clubs' practice of soliciting tween input to include involvement in hiring and space design decisions.</p>
PRINCIPLE N° 8 HANDS-ON SKILL BUILDING	<p>Regular, hands-on learning with current high-quality equipment; equipment was purchased with teaching artist input and was appropriate to student skill levels.</p>	<p>Engaging and retaining youth in the program through active learning.</p>	<p>YAI expanded Clubs' use of current equipment and technology in the resource-constrained context of the Club.</p>
PRINCIPLE N° 10 PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY	<p>Artists needed strong youth development skills to create emotional safety in YAI classes.</p> <p>Youth safely used tools and attempted challenging dance routines with adequate preparation and support.</p>	<p>Engaging and retaining youth in the program, particularly those that did not feel like they 'fit' in other Club spaces.</p>	<p>YAI caused Club's to re-examine and enhance emotional safety Club-wide.</p>

TABLE ES-5

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF QUALITY: EXTERNAL VISIBILITY AND SUPPORT FUNCTION AND EXPANSIONS AT A GLANCE

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE IN THE CLUB	FUNCTION	EXPANSIONS
PRINCIPLE N° 5 CULMINATING EVENTS	Art-form specific and cross-art form events that varied in size and were held in a variety of venues including at the Club as well as in the larger community.	Creating external visibility to bring recognition to youth and visibility to YAI in the Club, with parents and in the community.	Clubs had to balance youth development goals with high expectations, limiting external performance and shows until youth were ready for them. Principle 5 was expanded to accommodate a variety of event types including internal Club culminating events that provided a supportive and safe venue for beginners
PRINCIPLE N° 9 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	New and strengthened partnerships with community arts organizations; shared responsibility between leaders and artists for partnerships.	Creating external visibility to position YAI for sustainability and generating external support and recognition for YAI youth.	YAI expanded Club relationships in the local arts community and deepened parent engagement efforts.

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CONCLUSIONS AND REMAINING QUESTIONS

The YAI pilot demonstrated that BGCA could work with local affiliates to adapt the Ten Principles for Success to the unique characteristics of the YSO setting. However, Clubs made important adaptations to the Principles as well as to Club structures and practices in order to resolve two distinct tensions:

1. Art-specific tensions, which resulted from BGCA's new focus on artistic skill-development programming; and
2. Quality tensions, fueled by the Foundation's infusion of financial resources for YAI into BGCA and the Clubs.

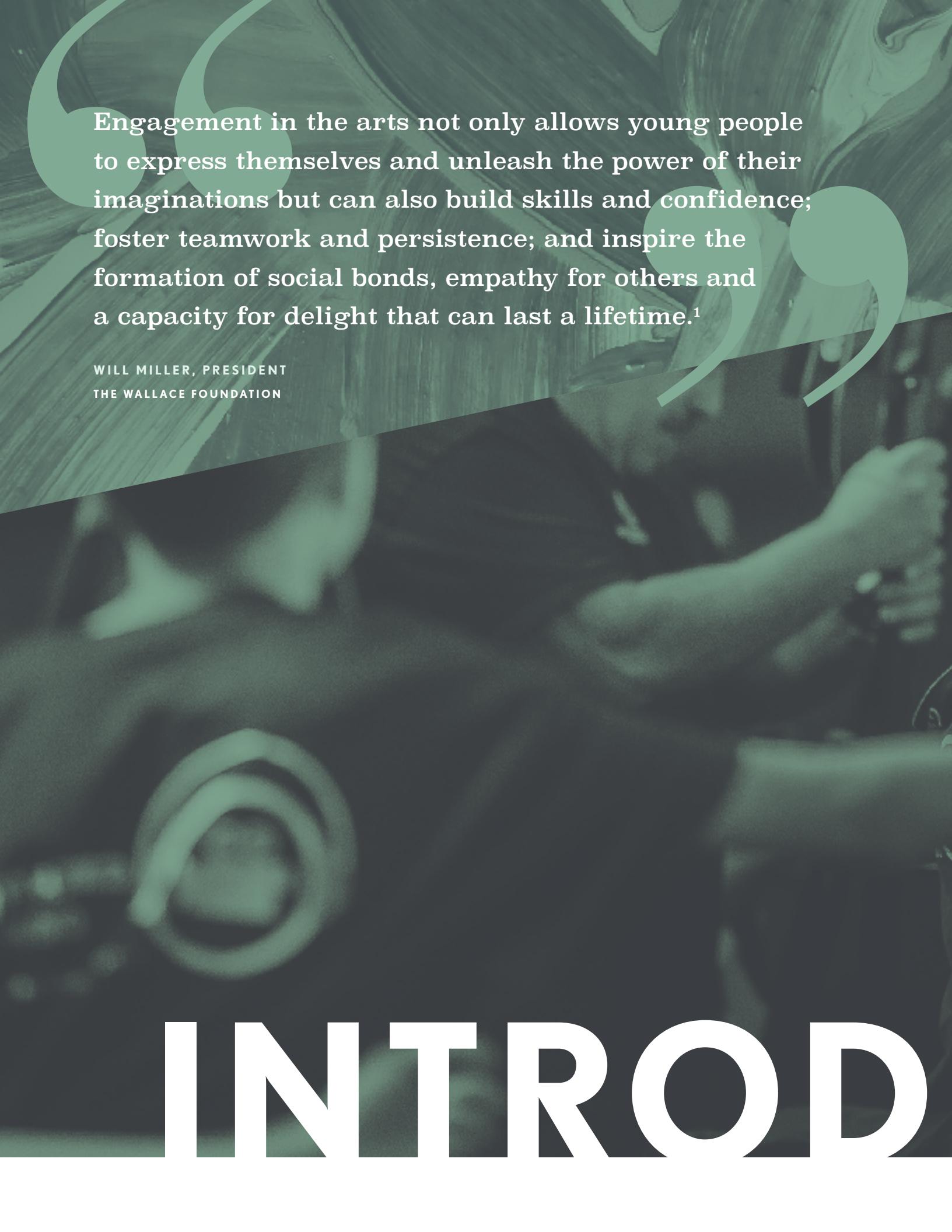
Despite the evident success of the YAI pilot, further questions remain:

Is YAI sustainable? Ultimately, BGCA's goal is to ensure equitable access to the arts. To succeed, YAI must be at a cost per child that aligns with Club resources. While the resources Clubs received expanded the Clubs' vision for quality programming, it also raised questions about sustainability. YAI's pilot was afforded generous financing with the goal of testing the ability of BGCA and its affiliates to create and implement art skill-development programs for tweens comparable to those implemented by exemplary after-school art education programs. The deep investments made by Wallace into the YAI pilot are not typical; Clubs usually program on much smaller budgets so they can serve as many youth as possible. As Clubs thought about sustaining the initiative after Wallace funding ended, they began to consider modifications to lower costs. However, it is unclear what modifications can be made to lower cost while also maintaining quality. BGCA will explore these trade-offs with the first wave of pilot Clubs in the final phase of their funding, and in the next phase of the initiative, BGCA will give pilot Clubs more flexibility in implementing YAI to see if the program can be replicated at a lower cost with similar outcomes. A study of the costs of these YAI approaches is expected in 2020; it will also document the compromises the Clubs had to make to achieve high-quality arts skill development at a cost that aligned with their budgets.

Is YAI scalable? YAI's scalability is contingent upon resources, capacity, and will. First, Clubs can only replicate YAI if it is offered at a per-child cost that aligns with their resources. Moving into the next wave of YAI sites, BGCA and Wallace will be exploring the viability of less resource-intensive options for YAI.

Second, while YAI's pilot was successful, it required that the Clubs make changes to their culture, structure, and operations to accommodate the Ten Principles. The extent to which other Clubs are able to and interested in making these types of changes is unknown. In particular, each pilot Club had an Executive Director who strongly believed in the value of the arts as a vehicle for positive youth development and embraced the changes that came with the Ten Principles. It is unclear whether other Clubs can bring the same level of organizational commitment for high-quality, rigorous art skill-development instruction as the three Clubs described in this report.

What are the outcomes for youth, and can early evidence of positive benefits be replicated as YAI expands? A companion report, to be released in 2018, will share early evidence of positive benefits among participants. Future research will follow YAI participants over time to test whether the benefits observed in this early research are occurring broadly and if they can be replicated. Ultimately, to aid in replication and scaling, it will be important to assess which of the Principles are most strongly related to positive participant outcomes.



Engagement in the arts not only allows young people to express themselves and unleash the power of their imaginations but can also build skills and confidence; foster teamwork and persistence; and inspire the formation of social bonds, empathy for others and a capacity for delight that can last a lifetime.¹

WILL MILLER, PRESIDENT
THE WALLACE FOUNDATION

INTROD



AUCTION

REPORT OVERVIEW

The report includes the following sections:

Chapter 1: Background on YAI

Chapter 2: Cross-Cutting Lessons: Implementation of the Ten Principles

Chapter 3: Transformative Principles: Creating a Foundation for YAI

Chapter 4: Essential Building Blocks of Quality: Youth Engagement

Chapter 5: Essential Building Blocks of Quality: External Visibility, Support, and Recognition

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Remaining Questions

INTRODUCTION

Research shows that involvement in the arts promotes positive youth development, yet far too few children from low-income homes have access to high-quality arts education, either in or outside of school.² These children are about half as likely to participate in arts programs as youth from more affluent families,³ and when they do, they are typically encouraged to make crafts rather than create unique work or develop formative artistic skills.⁴

As part of an ongoing, multimillion-dollar Wallace Foundation initiative to improve and expand arts learning opportunities for young people, the Foundation, in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), explored the feasibility of implementing a high-quality arts education program within a national youth-serving organization (YSO). The goal—increasing access to, quality of, and equity in arts education for low-income urban tweens in an after-school setting—required partnership with a national network of deeply-rooted neighborhood out-of-school time (OST) providers such as the Boys & Girls Clubs. The Youth Arts Initiative (YAI), as it is now known, is a unique approach to delivering otherwise inaccessible high-quality arts programs to urban youth.

In February 2014, three BGCA Clubs launched a YAI pilot modeled on a multi-year study of youth engagement in the arts called *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs*.⁵ BCGA used the Ten Principles for Success identified in *Something to Say* to transform existing arts programs into high-quality art skill-development opportunities for urban, low-income youth.⁶ In an attempt to identify lessons applicable to similar efforts by other YSOs, this report uses data from the first two-and-a-quarter years of the program's implementation to answer the fundamental question:

Can high-quality after-school art skill-development programs be incorporated into a multidisciplinary youth serving organization, and if so, how?

Our research indicates that BGCA and its pilot affiliate Clubs did, in fact, successfully implement high-quality art skill-development programs as defined by the Ten Principles for Success. The Clubs hired professional teaching artists, developed near studio-quality spaces, taught classes using near professional-quality equipment, and held public art performances, events, and shows. The program served more than 900 youth, including a core group of committed participants who reported learning artistic skills and having positive experiences unique to the program. But how did they do it? This report will examine how affiliate Clubs implemented the

Ten Principles for Success for after-school arts programming in YAI. Generally, the implementation of the Ten Principles proved to be a complex challenge.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is geared toward the field (including policy-makers, researchers, and arts education advocates) and practitioners in Clubs and other YSO organizations. While YAI was implemented in BGCA specifically, the lessons in this report are relevant for all YSOs that operate with common goals, serve low-income populations at low cost, and are focused on youth development and engagement.

The findings are based solely on early, ground-level implementation. Moving forward, The Wallace Foundation and BGCA will be replicating YAI across a larger and more diverse set of Clubs; further research findings will inform efforts to scale YAI broadly.

The report does not provide detailed information about YAI's recruitment and retention strategies, youth experiences in the program, youth outcomes, cost, or scaling. Since the program is still young, this report does not offer data that substantiate the assumption that YAI had positive impacts on its participants. Additionally, it only touches on BGCA's evolving role. These topics will be covered in upcoming reports, including a report on youth perceptions and experiences in the initiative and a final report, which will include more information about YAI's outcomes and cost, as well as how BGCA expanded the initiative.

The report is intended to be user-friendly and is divided into several accessible sections. It includes design elements intended to aid in its navigation. For instance, potential funders and researchers can locate key takeaways in the "Cross-Cutting Findings" section. Practitioners will find detailed information later, including call-out boxes with strategies for implementation and alignment of the Ten Principles within the culture of the YAI Clubs.

The findings presented in this report are derived primarily from qualitative data drawn from interviews with YAI and Club staff and leadership. Other data sources include participant

focus group and survey data, participant attendance and background data, and parent focus group data. Data sources included:

- Five rounds of Club site visits. During these visits, researchers conducted the following data collection activities:
 - + Focus groups with non-YAI Club staff;
 - + Interviews with Club staff, including Art Liaisons,⁷ Unit Directors, Club leadership, Teaching Artists, and community partners;
 - + Club tours and observation of YAI space;
 - + Observation of all skill-development classes;
 - + Focus groups with skill-development participants and parents;
 - + Skill-development class participation surveys; and
 - + Focus groups with past YAI participants.
- YAI staff survey
- Youth Program Quality Assessment: Organizational survey
- Review of Club websites and social media
- Culminating Events forms
- Club-gathered YAI participation and participant background data
- Club-wide attendance data

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

BGCA: Boys & Girls Clubs of America

YAI: Youth Arts Initiative

YSO: National youth-serving organization

Club: Boys & Girls Club city-wide umbrella organization

Unit: The neighborhood-based building within a Club where programming occurs

Member: A youth who attends the Club

OST: Out-of-school time

¹Denise Montgomery, Peter Rogovin, and Neromanie Persaud, "Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts." The Wallace Foundation, 2013: 5.

²Ibid, 11.

³National Endowment for the Arts, 2011 Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Arts Participation & A 2009 Census Bureau survey (A Child's Day 2009).

⁴Denise Montgomery, Peter Rogovin, and Neromanie Persaud, "Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts." The Wallace Foundation, 2013: 11.

⁵The study was conducted by Next Level Strategic Marketing Group and included data from best practice arts organizations, tweens with moderate and high engagement in the arts, and field experts.

⁶We use the term "arts" to describe a variety of artistic activities, recognizing that in and of itself, the term does not acknowledge the broad diversity of creative artistic endeavors.

⁷Liaisons were the day-to-day managers of the YAI initiative, supervising the artists and working to create the infrastructure for YAI. See a complete description of their role on page 32.

BACKGROUND

01

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES DETAILS ABOUT THE YAI MODEL, PARTICIPANTS, AND PILOT CLUBS, AS WELL AS THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL OFFICE IN THE YAI STARTUP.

ABOUT YAI

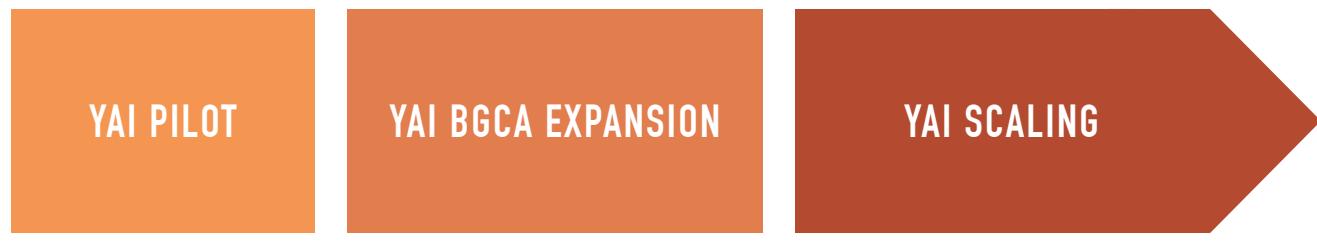
The goal of YAI is to increase access to high-quality art programs that develop artistic skills for low-income urban youth through the implementation of these programs in YSOs.

YAI started with a pilot phase in three Clubs in 2014. As part of an ongoing, multimillion-dollar initiative to improve and expand arts learning opportunities for young people, The Wallace Foundation provided BGCA with resources to experiment with their approach,

develop tools, assess the progress of the program, and create a platform for cross-organizational learning. In subsequent phases, The Wallace Foundation and BGCA plan to test YAI across a larger and more diverse set of Clubs. This expansion will be informed by the lessons learned during the pilot phase, but will aim to do so at a lower cost while reaching more youth. Ultimately, as depicted in Figure 1, the lessons learned from the YAI pilot and expansion will be available to a much larger set of YSOs as they develop quality art skill-development programs for low-income youth across the country.

FIGURE 1

PROGRESSION OF YAI



PROOF OF CONCEPT

Can the Success Principles be implemented in a Club?

MODIFICATION OF CONCEPT

What does it take to replicate the Success Principles across more Clubs?

EXPANSION OF CONCEPT

Can the Success Principles be scaled inside & outside of BGCA?

THE TEN PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS

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In YAI, high-quality after-school arts programming is defined by the “Ten Principles for Success” described in the Wallace Foundation’s *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts*. In the past, low-income youth could rely on school curricula for arts exposure and training in music, theater, and the visual arts. Many schools, however, have abandoned these programs in an effort to cut costs and bolster academic performance. Researchers hired by the Wallace Foundation interviewed more than 200 teens and their families, approaching them as consumers, to examine their feelings and expectations about after-school arts education programs. They incorporated these findings, along with views from arts program directors, researchers, and other authorities, into *Something to Say*, a guide to developing and improving after-school arts programming for low-income youth. Instead of forming new arts-only organizations, the Wallace Foundation and BGCA explored the possibility of implementing these rigorous principles in existing YSOs—those that demonstrated a belief in the value of the arts, had the infrastructure to support them, and had a footprint that allowed them to reach youth in low-income neighborhoods.

In *Something to Say*, researchers learned that in many YSOs, existing art programs are led by youth development professionals who do not

encourage youth to create their own unique artwork or develop specific artistic skills; they are not high-quality art skill-development programs.

Many young people interested in the arts do not find this approach engaging. Youth and leaders in the after-school arts education field reveal that what youth really want is:

- The ‘wow’ factor of a professional artist;
- Space for the arts that belongs to them;
- Safety that will permit them to express themselves artistically;
- To be among individuals who respect the arts and artists; and
- To have genuine hands-on experiences creating artwork of their own.⁸

These and other factors that matter to high-quality after-school arts programming are represented in the Ten Principles.

The Ten Principles include both practices identified as important for quality after-school art skill-development programs (the first five Principles) as well as core tenets of high-quality youth development (the last five Principles). They are detailed in Table 1.

⁸ Denise Montgomery, Peter Rogovin, and Neromanie Persaud, “Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts.” The Wallace Foundation, 2013.

TABLE 1

THE TEN PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS FROM SOMETHING TO SAY

PRINCIPLE N° 1

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICING ARTISTS

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

Instructors are professional, practicing artists, and are valued with compensation for their expertise and investment in their professional development.

PRINCIPLE N° 2

EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

Executive directors have a public commitment to high-quality arts programs that is supported by sustained action.

PRINCIPLE N° 3

DEDICATED SPACES

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

Arts programs take place in dedicated, inspiring, welcoming spaces and affirm the value of art and artists.

PRINCIPLE N° 4

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

There is a culture of high expectations, respect for creative expression and affirmation of youth participants as artists.

PRINCIPLE N° 5

CULMINATING EVENTS

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCK OF QUALITY: EXTERNAL VISIBILITY, SUPPORT, AND RECOGNITION

Programs culminate in high-quality public events with real audiences.

PRINCIPLE N° 6

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCK OF QUALITY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Positive relationships with adult mentors and peers foster a sense of belonging and acceptance.

PRINCIPLE N° 7

YOUTH INPUT

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCK OF QUALITY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth participants actively shape programs and assume meaningful leadership roles.

PRINCIPLE N° 8

HANDS-ON SKILL BUILDING

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCK OF QUALITY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Programs focus on hands-on skill building using current equipment and technology.

PRINCIPLE N° 9

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCK OF QUALITY: EXTERNAL VISIBILITY, SUPPORT, AND RECOGNITION

Programs strategically engage key stakeholders to create a network of support for both youth participants and programs.

PRINCIPLE N° 10

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL SAFETY

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCK OF QUALITY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Programs provide a physically and emotionally safe place for youth.

FIGURE 2

SIMILAR AND UNIQUE FEATURES OF BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS AND COMMUNITY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS





The Principles for Success were partially based on the experiences of successful art-focused organizations, not YSOs, and there are notable differences between the two types of organizations. Both types of organizations want youth to thrive socially, emotionally, and cognitively, and both have youth development at their core: they strive to create safe environments where youth feel like they belong, engage in positive activities, and have the opportunity to develop strong, supportive, and positive relationships with adults and peers. But they also differ in significant ways, as shown in Figure 2.

Some of the most notable differences between the two types of organizations and their approaches to the arts are as follows:

Breadth vs. depth: Clubs strive for holistic youth development by providing multiple programs for participants to explore. Arts-focused organizations focus on holistic youth development through the arts.

Open-access vs. selective participation: Clubs endeavor to be safe havens where youth with varying interests can find refuge from negative influences in a structured after-school environment. Accordingly, all participation is voluntary, and Clubs rarely turn away participants. Community arts-focused programs, on the other hand,

are spaces designed to make youth comfortable with taking risks; they frequently restrict enrollment to cohesive cohorts that their budgets can support. Additionally, since these programs are often focused on skill development, attendance can be mandatory.

Generalists vs. specialists: Clubs are staffed by youth development workers. As generalists, they can work in many program areas and are frequently part-time. The Clubs' open access approach requires Clubs to hire more staff to accommodate larger numbers of youth. Given the Clubs' funding environment, these youth development staff often receive low wages. In contrast, community arts-focused programs offer programming for a smaller number of youth and are staffed by professional artists who are compensated at rates that acknowledge their expertise.

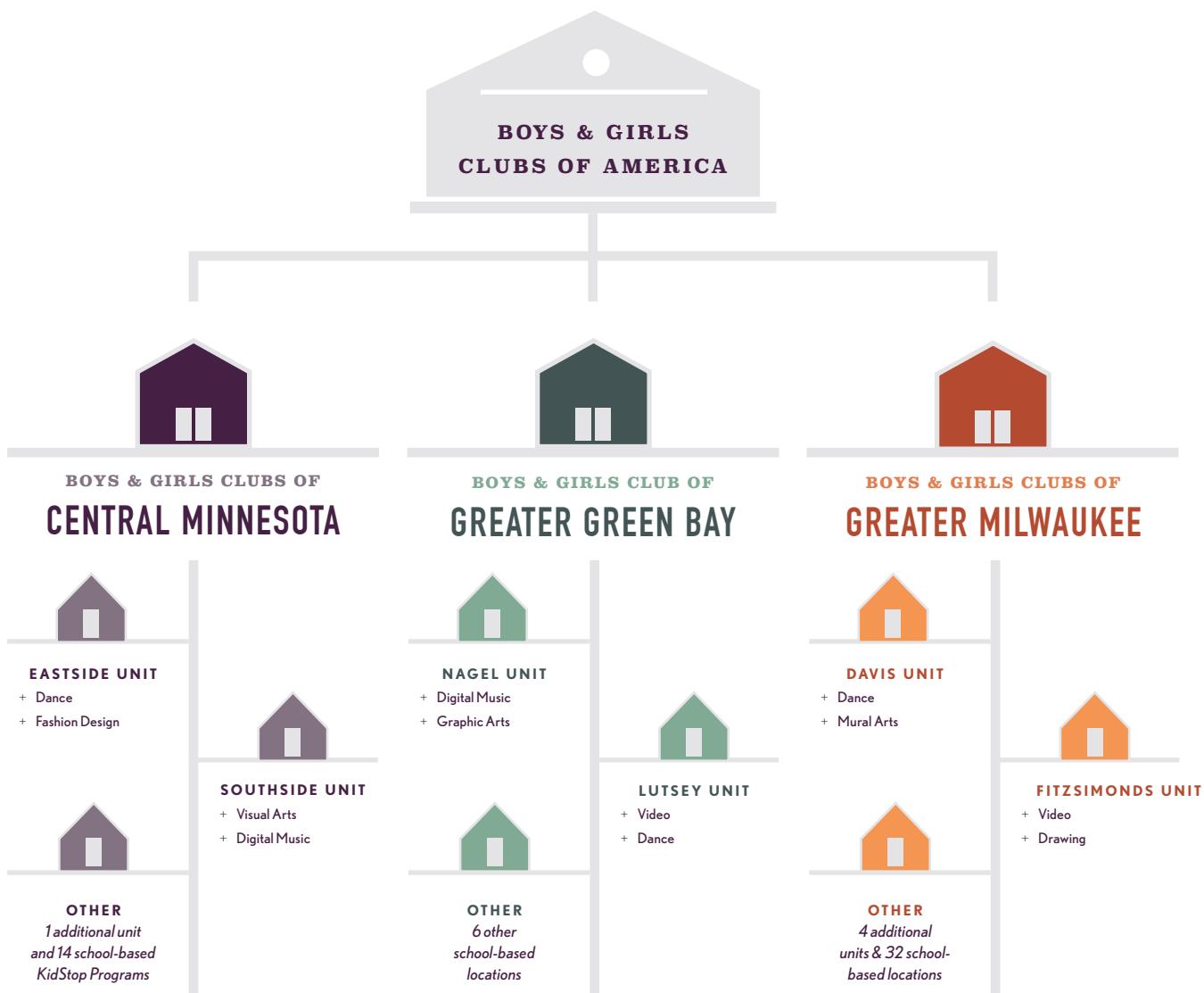
For these reasons, Clubs often find themselves stretching their resources to serve as many youth as possible, while the narrow focus of community arts organizations permits them to target their resources.

Tweens vs. teens: The Principles for Success were derived from the practices of successful art-focused organizations who serve teens. YAI, on the other hand, was designed to serve tweens, raising the question if the Principles can be successfully implemented with younger youth.

FIGURE 3

STRUCTURE OF YAI PILOT, INCLUDING ART FORMS

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⁹Amy Arbreton, Molly Bradshaw, Jessica Sheldon, and Sarah Pepper. "Making Every Day Count: Boys & Girls Clubs' Role in Promoting Positive Outcomes for Teens." Public Private Ventures, 2009; Sipe, Cynthia L. and Patricia Ma (1998). Support for Youth: A Profile of Three Communities. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures; American Youth Policy Forum (2006). Helping Youth Succeed Through Out of School Time Programs. Washington, D.C.: American Youth Policy Forum.

THE YAI PILOT STRUCTURE

The YAI pilot involved BGCA (the national office), three affiliate Clubs (the local umbrella organizations), and six units (Clubhouses where YAI programming happened). The structure of the pilot is depicted in Figure 3.

There are several notable elements of the YAI pilot:

BGCA was the national YSO grantee for YAI. BGCA, as the primary recipient of The Wallace Foundation's grant, is the intermediary organization for YAI's pilot, overseeing and supporting its implementation since the start of the initiative. BGCA is a federated structure; each Club is its own independent organization. As such, the national office has limited authority over Clubs; its role is to provide technical assistance, curricula, and advocacy for Clubs across the nation.

BGCA was interested in YAI because it recognizes art as a powerful tool for youth development, and it wanted to increase the quality of its arts programming in a significant way. BGCA also participated in the initiative, hoping to attract youth early so they could retain them through their teenage years. Participation in out-of-school programs, including those at Boys & Girls Clubs, tends to decline as children enter their teens.⁹ BGCA leadership hoped that, through YAI, they might discover strategies to help curb this decline.

Three Clubs were awarded a grant to implement YAI. BGCA selected three pilot Clubs—Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Green Bay, and Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee—to test YAI and the Ten Principles in a YSO. The Clubs were selected by a rigorous Request for Proposals (RFP) process. BGCA identified a population of Clubs that had interest in the arts, had been operating arts programs, and had strong programming across a variety of areas. The proposal review process was extensive; ultimately, these Clubs were chosen due to their:

- Low-income population served;
- Commitment to and interest in the arts;
- Previous arts programming;
- Programming and space capacity; and
- Geographic proximity to one another.

BGCA did not choose Clubs that already had well-established arts programs. West End House in Boston, for example, was not chosen because it already offered visual and performing arts programs taught by professional artists with a focus on artistic skill development and mastery. Rather, BGCA focused on Clubs that were committed to the arts but had not yet developed a "high-quality" art skill-development program. For instance, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota had already invested in its theater program, and Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee had an arts department that supported programming across its units, but neither Club employed professional artists or featured other aspects of high-quality arts programming.

Each Club selected two units to execute YAI's programming, and each of those units implemented two art forms. Figure 3 also displays the four art forms selected by each Club. Units asked youth to help select the art forms.

FIGURE 4

TIMELINE OF YAI'S PILOT START UP



TABLE 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF PILOT SITES

PILOT SITE	BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA	BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF GREATER GREEN BAY	BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF GREATER MILWAUKEE
CLUB SIZE	3 units and 14 school-based locations	2 units and 6 school-based locations	6 units and 32 school-based locations
CITY POPULATION	66,297	104,769	598,402
CITY POVERTY RATE AS COMPARED TO STATE	23.1% (11.2% state)	12.5% (12.5% state)	28.3% (12.5% state)
ARTS PROGRAMS AVAILABLE	Several community arts organizations, including one youth dance program Visual arts teacher in every high school	Few community arts organizations and none doing digital music One specialty arts high school	Numerous community arts organizations Eight specialty arts high schools Initiative to bring back arts to schools
CLUB'S PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH ARTS PROGRAMMING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photography Digital Arts Suite Drum Troupe Drama Matters Dance Theater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Arts Festival Music Photography Pottery Crafts Fine Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual Arts Dance Fine Arts Theater Music

Full-time and part-time models. To investigate the efficacy of each approach, each unit employed one full-time and one part-time teaching artist.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PILOT SITES

Each YAI Club served low-income youth, but Clubs varied in size and had different levels of access to rich, diverse local arts communities. Table 2 summarizes key characteristics of the YAI pilot sites.

- **Club size.** BGC of Greater Milwaukee was the largest Club involved in the YAI pilot: Over 700 staff members serve, on average, more than 5,000 youth per day in 44 locations. BGC of Central Minnesota has three physical units and 14 school-based locations; they serve an average of 1,600 children daily. BGC of Greater Green Bay has two physical units and six school-based after-school programs serving 750 children a day, on average.
- **Local arts community.** The complexity and organization of local arts communities varied considerably. At launch, Green Bay had fewer community arts organizations compared to the other

two pilot sites (and none involving digital music, one of Green Bay's YAI art skill-development areas). Further, most schools in Green Bay offered only 45 minutes of art per week. St. Cloud, the home of BGC of Central Minnesota, had a small arts community and offered visual arts in every high school. Milwaukee had a vigorous arts community with several arts high schools and numerous local organizations. The size of the arts community had important implications for the availability of teaching artists and community partners—both key facets of YAI.

YAI PROGRAMMING: DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Typically, YAI classes enrolled 8–18 students and were offered in sessions throughout the year. At first, these classes were held in six-week sessions during the school year, plus three or four one-week summer sessions. However, teaching artists learned that these time constraints did not allow for meaningful skill development; by the end of the pilot, teaching artists varied the session lengths at their discretion.

YAI incorporates two different types of classes: skill-development classes and exposure classes.

Skill-development classes teach youth artistic skills. Classes were held several times a week for 1–2 hours with the explicit goal of building skills specific to the art form, such as:

- Demonstrating competence and confidence in performing a variety of dance moves and how to effectively communicate intent or meaning through movement;
- Understanding of basic design and color principles and ability to demonstrate the use of basic tools, techniques, and processes, including paints and surfaces; and
- Demonstrating competence and confidence in sewing, including use of a sewing machine and other tools, use of patterns, and hand-sewing techniques.

Regular attendance was expected, and participants needed to arrive in time to change their clothes, set up materials, stretch, or prepare equipment. In skill-development classes, teaching artists implemented the Ten Principles by working towards a culminating event, building skills through instruction and review, using proper art terms, teaching about the process of creating art, and teaching participants to create original work. Every class had a strict code of conduct that promoted physical and emotional safety. By the end of the study period, most art forms offered more than one skill-development class per week to accommodate youth of different ages (10–12 and 13–14), skill levels (beginner to advanced), and interests (hip hop or ballet, drawing or painting).

Exposure classes were designed for participants with an interest in the art form who are not ready or able to commit to the skill-development classes. YAI teaching artists conducted varying types of exposure classes:



- **Open studio.** At least once a week, instructors opened their studio and allowed all Club members to experiment with art supplies and equipment. Originally, this open studio time was envisioned as a recruitment tool for YAI skill-development classes. However, as the initiative progressed it became clear that, while open studio did provide an opportunity for youth to explore the art form, it did not lead large numbers of tweens to join skill-development classes. Instead, it functioned as a stand-alone drop-in program similar to other Club arts classes. Approximately 25% of open studio participants eventually committed to a skill-development class, while others attended open studio classes only or both skill development and open studio classes. Open studio became an opportunity for skill-development participants to practice and complete skill-development work, for teaching artists to implement art activities for tweens that were not focused on skill development, and for youth who were not yet tweens to experience the art form.
- **"Try it" week.** Participants were given a week, typically at the beginning of a session, to try out a class without the obligation to commit.
- **Other exposure classes.** In order to recruit new participants and increase visibility, YAI also offered exposure classes to younger and older Club members, members of other Clubs, and school groups.

CHARACTERISTICS OF YAI PARTICIPANTS

YAI was designed to serve tweens in low-income communities. Table 3 describes a range of participant characteristics.

40 **A total of 929 tweens participated over the study period.** The number of participants varied depending on art form, type of class, launch date, and Club capacity.

Participation was skewed towards younger tweens. BGCA wanted to bolster participation among tweens and keep them connected to the Club. YAI was successful in reaching this target population, though participation still skewed towards younger tweens. Clubs served a small number of youth who were under 10, primarily those who would turn 10 during the school year.

More females participated than males. As seen in Table 3, a majority of participants were girls; however, this largely depended on unit and art form. Units with dance classes, for example, had a higher percentage of female participants than units without dance classes.

A majority of participants were African-American or Latino and low income. Milwaukee served the highest percentage of youth of color: 59% of YAI participants were African American, 28% were Latino, and 10% of youth were other races/ethnicities (the majority of which reported multiple races/ethnicities). However, a majority of YAI participants in the other

TABLE 3

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TWEENS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ANY YAI ACTIVITY

	BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA <i>n=358</i>	BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF GREATER GREEN BAY <i>n=254</i>	BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF GREATER MILWAUKEE <i>n=317</i>	OVERALL <i>n=929</i>
% FEMALE	58%	57%	62%	59%
% MALE	42%	43%	38%	41%
% AFRICAN AMERICAN	48%	48%	59%	52%
% HISPANIC/LATINO	7%	12%	28%	15%
% CAUCASIAN	22%	27%	3%	17%
% OTHER	23%	14%	10%	16%
% FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH	91%	79%	100%	91%
% UNDER 10 YEARS OLD	12%	14%	14%	13%
% 10-11 YEARS OLD	49%	54%	56%	53%
% 12-14 YEARS OLD	39%	33%	30%	34%

Note: n=252 for Green Bay free or reduced-price lunch.

Note: n=185 for Central Minnesota free or reduced-price lunch.

two Clubs were also youth of color. In Central Minnesota, 48% of youth were African American, 7% were Latino, and 23% of youth reported another or more than one racial/ethnic category. In Green Bay, 48% of youth were African American, 12% were Latino and 14% reported another or more than one racial/ethnic category. Caucasian youth and youth of other races/ethnicities (the majority of which were multiple races/ethnicities) represented a significant minority of youth—ranging from 3% of the population in Milwaukee to 27% in Green Bay. Finally, the vast majority of participants were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.¹⁰

Some tweens who participated in YAI had little to no

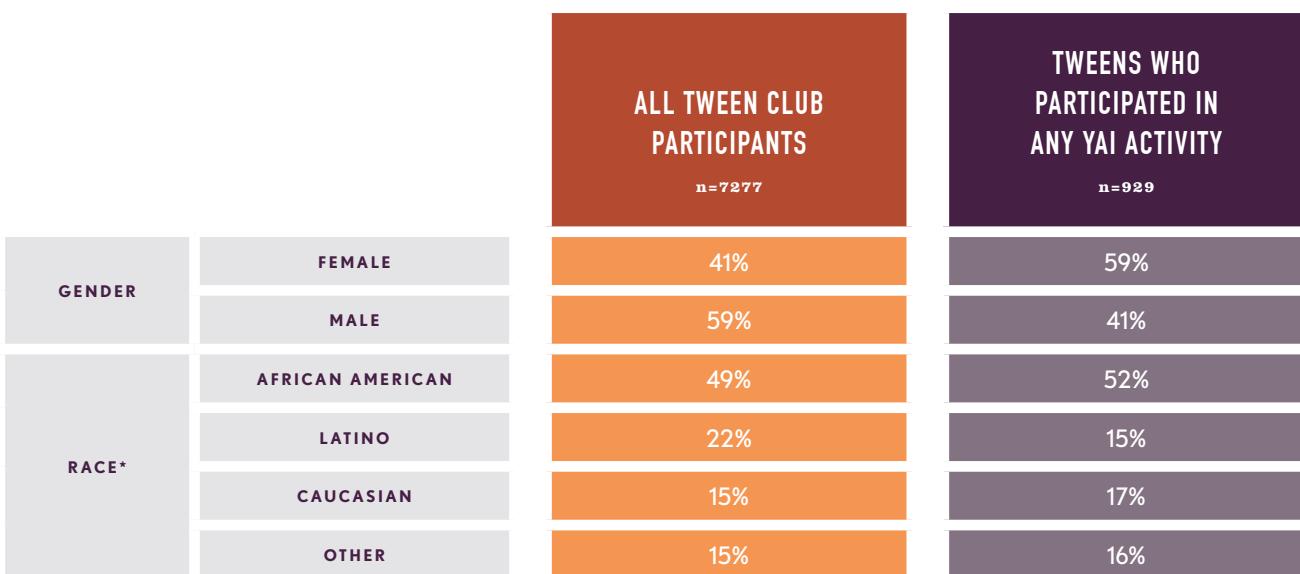
experience with the art form. Youth focus group data and early surveys showed that participants had no experience with the technical art forms. Tweens most commonly reported experience in painting and drawing, mostly through classes in school. Dance classes drew a combination of tweens who had previously taken dance lessons and tweens who had not.

YAI participants' race and ethnicity reflected Club demographics, but females were overrepresented. The majority of Club tweens are male, but YAI participants were more likely to be female.

¹⁰ While free or reduced-price lunch is often used as a proxy for poverty, it is important to note that the statistic includes: 1) youth from families that fall under 185% of the poverty line, 2) some additional non-poor children who meet other eligibility criteria (e.g., foster youth), and 3) students in schools and districts that have exercised the Community Eligibility option.

TABLE 4

GENDER OF TWEENS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ANY YAI ACTIVITY AS COMPARED TO ALL TWEEN CLUB PARTICIPANTS



* Missing two participants who did not report race

42

TABLE 5

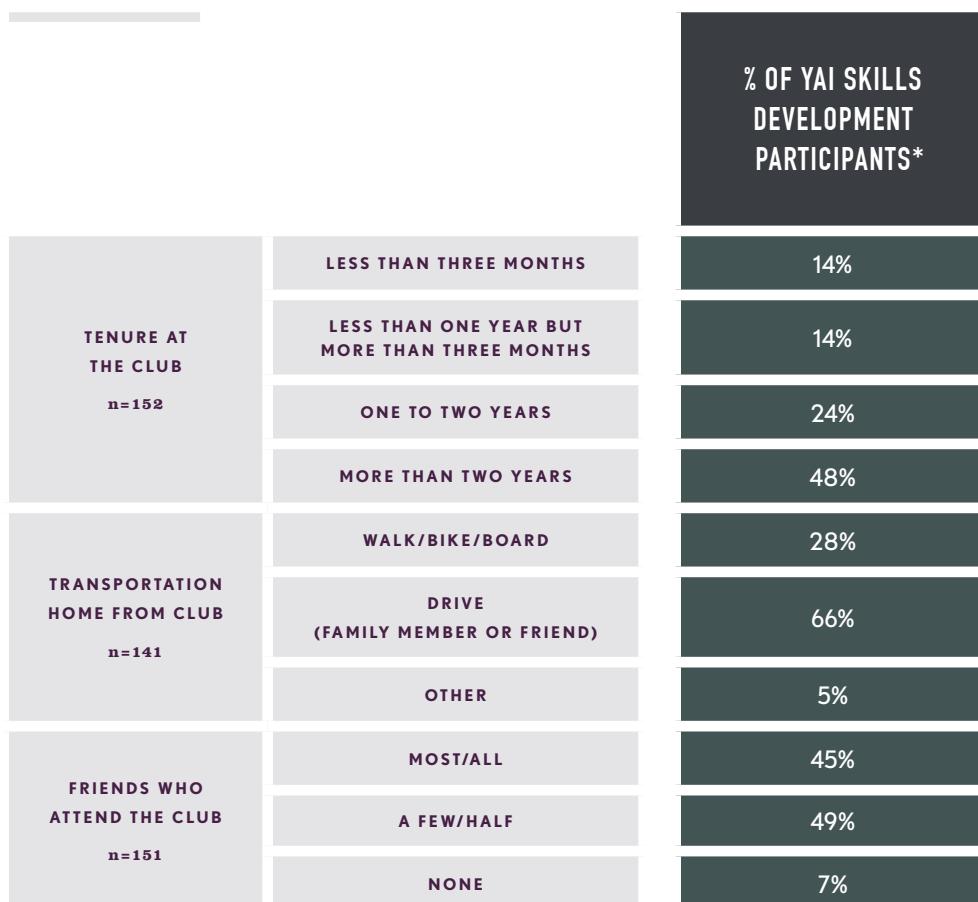
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TWEENS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ANY YAI ACTIVITY BY ART FORM



Note: Performing Arts = 3 classes; Visual Arts = 3 classes; Technical Arts = 6 classes.

TABLE 6

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF YAI PARTICIPANTS



* Based on a participant's first response to YAI youth survey.

Table 5 displays gender by art form. Technical arts (which include film/video production, graphic arts, digital music and fashion design) had almost equal proportions of male and female participants. However, in both visual and performing arts (which, in YAI's pilot, included only dance), girls outnumbered boys. This was particularly pronounced in the performing arts, reflecting the field as a whole.

YAI participants were mostly Club members. Table 6 shows that the vast majority of YAI participants had previously attended the Club—and this was purposeful. At the start of YAI, Clubs were already serving low-income urban tweens interested in the arts, but without access to high-quality art skill-development opportunities. Because of this, Clubs felt strongly that current members should be prioritized.

Consequently, YAI focused early recruitment efforts within the Club before moving on to recruit from schools, other Clubs, and other YSOs as the initiative matured.

YAI participants relied on adults for transportation and had friends who came to the Club. Table 6 also shows that two-thirds of youth were driven home from the Club—an issue that emerged as important to their participation in YAI—while another quarter were within walking distance. And, in line with previous research showing increased attendance among tweens and teens who report having friends at the Club,¹¹ only a small minority reported having no friends at the Club.

¹¹ Amy Arbreton, Molly Bradshaw, Jessica Sheldon, and Sarah Pepper. "Making Every Day Count: Boys & Girls Clubs' Role in Promoting Positive Outcomes for Teens." Public Private Ventures, 2009.

CROSS-CUTTING LESSONS: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEN PRINCIPLES

02



THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES BROAD IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS ACROSS ALL TEN PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS.

In YAI's implementation, four cross-cutting lessons emerged:

1. A YSO that is not primarily focused on the arts can implement a high-quality art skill-development program.
2. All of the Principles were important to the success of YAI in a YSO: Some led the transformative change within the Clubs needed to implement the Ten Principles, and others served as building blocks of arts-program quality.
3. The infusion of resources to YAI expanded Clubs' visions of quality.
4. BGCA played an important role in maintaining focus on the Principles and how they differed from Clubs' typical practices.

CROSS-CUTTING LESSON 1

A YSO that is not primarily focused on the arts can implement a high-quality art skill development program.

The YAI pilot proved that it is possible to implement high-quality art skill-development programming in a YSO and that implementation can lead to high levels of youth engagement, artistic skill development, and increased tween participation.

The Ten Principles were implemented successfully. Our survey

asked skill-development class participants twice per year about the extent to which they experienced applicable Principles. Across Clubs and administrations, tweens reported:

- Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists): 96-100% of participants agreed that the teaching artist was very good at the art form.
- Principle 3 (Dedicated spaces): 86-98% reported that the art room made them feel excited.
- Principle 4 (High expectations): 95-100% agreed that the teaching artist expected them to do their best.
- Principle 6 (Positive adult-youth and peer relationships): 84-97% agreed that the teaching artist listened to them, and 72-81% made a new friend in the art class.
- Principle 7 (Youth input): 80-94% agreed that the teaching artist asked for their suggestions on class content and process.
- Principle 8 (Hands-on skill building): 54-86% agreed that they spent most of the time in class making art.
- Principle 10 (Physical and emotional safety): 89-97% felt safe in class.

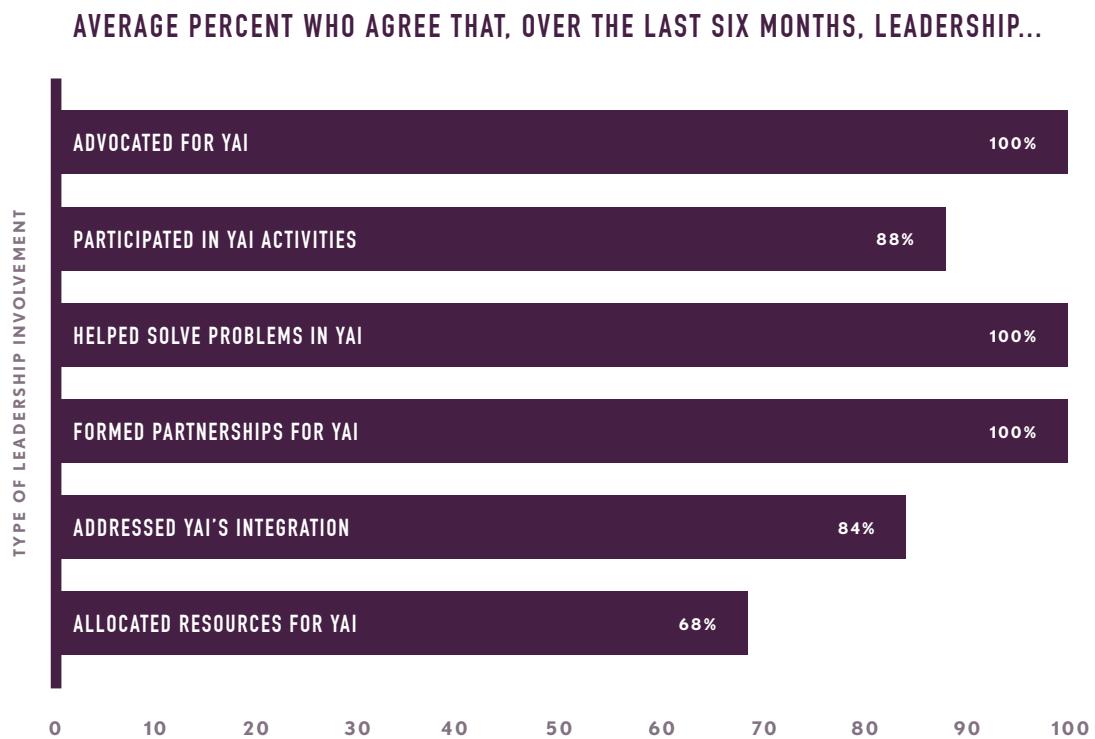
Observations of programming and interviews with teaching artists and YAI leaders corroborate tweens' reports that these Principles were implemented. Interviews and staff survey data substantiate implementation of the remaining Principles. Figure 5 displays teaching artist and liaison perceptions of the implementation of Principle 2 (Executive commitment).

¹² In this, and other sections of this report, we use shortened language to describe the Principles. Please refer to the Ten Principles list to see the full definition of each Principle.

FIGURE 5

YAI TEACHING ARTIST AND LIAISON PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPLE 2: EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT, SPRING 2016

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Note: Percentages represent the average of liaisons' (n=3) and teaching artists' (n=12) endorsement of the items under each construct. Teaching artists and liaisons are weighted equally in the calculation. Advocated is comprised of two items; participated is comprised of four items; solved problems is comprised of one item; formed partnerships is comprised of one item; addressed integration is comprised of two items; and allocated resources is comprised of one item. Only liaisons were asked about resources."

The kids value [the YAI program] more than any other program, and the dedication shows. They are here all the time; they never miss a session.

CLUB STAFF MEMBER

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

- Principle 9 (Community engagement): All three Clubs had partnered with community organizations by the close of the research period. Survey data demonstrated that in spring 2016, YAI teaching artists, liaisons, and leaders had formed partnerships with five types of partners (see page 134).
- Principle 5 (Culminating events): Every skill-development class held culminating events, many of them public, by spring 2016. From 2015 to spring 2016, YAI held nine culminating events open to the general public.

High levels of youth engagement were reported and observed. A core group of tweens became long-term, committed YAI participants; around a quarter of all participants attended for one or more years. Program observations, staff and parent interviews, and participant focus groups revealed that the majority of participants were very enthusiastic and engaged in their YAI classes. Club staff members who were not involved in YAI said:

Kids love it. [...] When YAI starts, they run to that room and just sit outside the door until she opens it and they can go in and start.

The kids value [the YAI program] more than any other program, and the dedication shows. They are here all the time; they never miss a session.

Many parents confirmed that their tweens were practicing the art form and talking about their classes at home. One mother said:

The program is a big deal, family-wise, because they bring home so much of it. We talk about it more than school! It's such a big deal—it's such an accomplishment.

Another said:

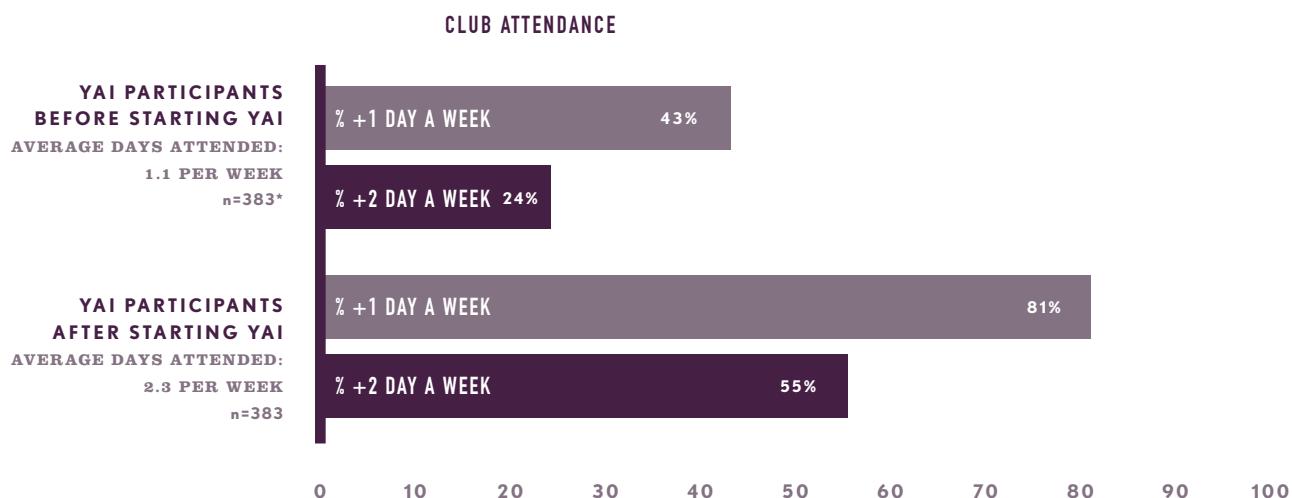
[My daughter] did fashion design, and she was really immersed in it. There are times where I can't find her, and I'll holler, "Where are you?" And she says, "I'm downstairs sewing." She set up her own sewing thing. She uses my sewing machine more than I do—she designs everything from Barbie to American Girl doll things for herself.

Parents in focus groups were overwhelmingly positive about the YAI experience for their children; none had negative comments about the program.

Youth developed art skills. Parents, Club staff, and participant focus groups confirmed this finding. Most YAI participants had little prior experience with high-quality arts programs, but they quickly learned to describe and use art tools, basic dance moves, and basic beats. According to their parents, children gained self-confidence and a sense of responsibility as they learned these concrete skills. By our fourth and fifth site visits, tween participants could articulate the processes they used to create their work as well as describe more sophisticated art concepts. YAI participants said:

FIGURE 6

CLUB ATTENDANCE AMONG YAI PARTICIPANTS AND NON-YAI PARTICIPATING CLUB MEMBERS



* 383 represents YAI participants who began participating in YAI after they were 10 years old.

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I learned how to sew with the sewing machine and by hand. When the sewing machine doesn't have any more thread, I know how to reload it and set it up. I learned how to use those electric scissors, too.

The process of creating is to first imagine what you are going to draw. Then the next step is you sketch it out to see what it looks like. If it does not look right to you, then you sketch it again. [Only when it looks] right—that's when you start coloring it in to find out [which] colors you want to use. Then you paint it on a canvas.

YAI participants increased their participation in the Club. YSO attendance typically dips as children age, particularly when they no longer need after-school supervision.¹³ This usually comes at the same time they develop more voice and choice in what they do after school. But youth who participated in YAI's skill-development classes often maintained high levels of participation. Figure 6 shows the

average number of days and the percent of tweens who participated in the Club for one day or more, or two days or more, per week over the school year before and after their first participation in YAI.

A future report on YAI will explore YAI tweens' engagement in greater detail.

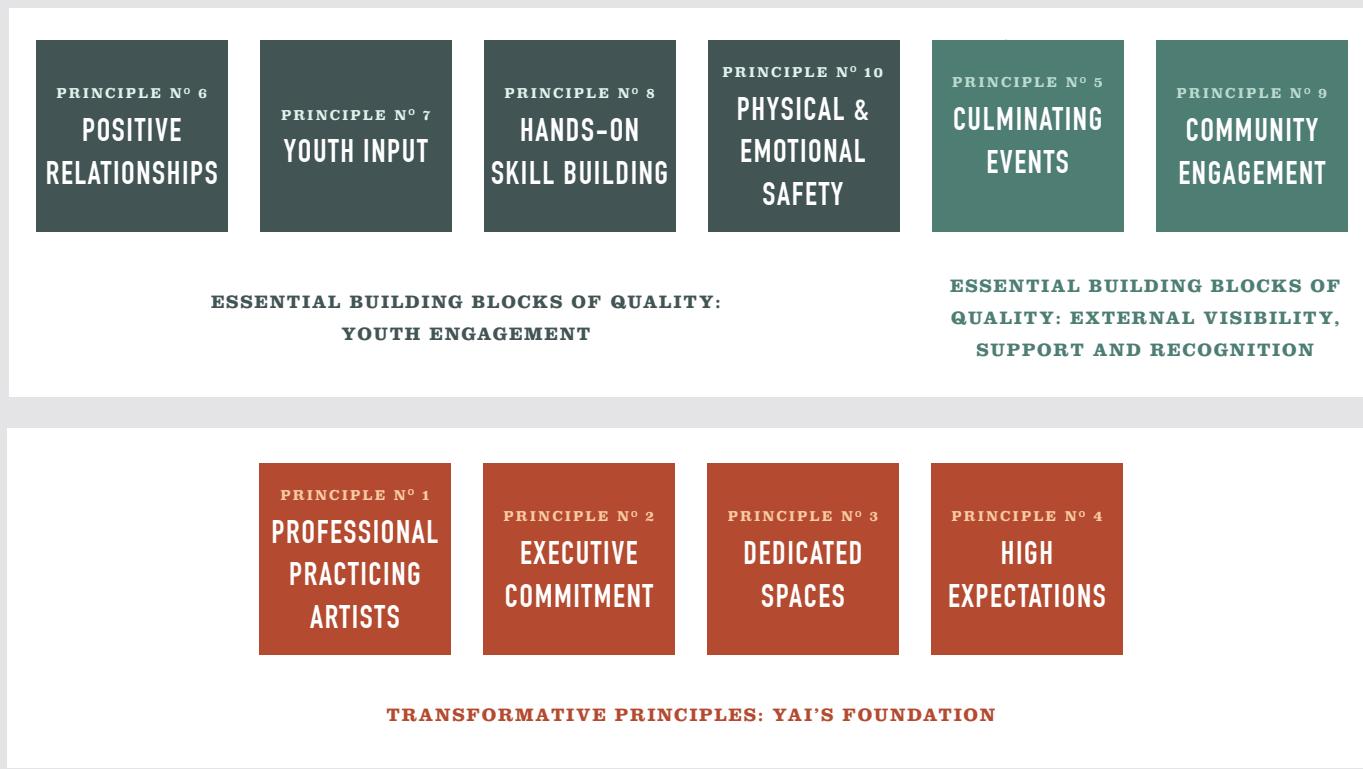
CROSS-CUTTING LESSON 2

All of the Principles were important: Some led the transformative change within the Clubs needed to implement the Ten Principles, and the others served as building blocks of arts-program quality, expanding youth development practices.

¹³ Amy Arbreton, Molly Bradshaw, Jessica Sheldon, and Sarah Pepper. "Making Every Day Count: Boys & Girls Clubs' Role in Promoting Positive Outcomes for Teens." Public Private Ventures, 2009.

FIGURE 7

FUNCTION OF PRINCIPLES IN YAI



As can be seen in Figure 7, four of the Ten Principles were transformative in a YSO setting, generating the new organizational practices and culture needed to operate a successful art skill-building program in the Club's multi-program, resource-constrained environment. These Principles and their implementation did not align with the Club's operational structure or cultural ethos and created tension. The other six Principles, which built on the Club's typical practices, formed the building blocks of quality programming and did not create tension when implemented in the Clubs.

Because the Clubs' culture clashed with Principles 1 (Professional practicing teaching artists), 2 (Executive commitment), 3 (Dedicated spaces), and 4 (High expectations), implementation required significant shifts in either the Club's operations or to the Principle itself.

Clubs had to look for ways to adapt these Principles, as well as their own beliefs and approaches, to reduce tension.

Club adaptation. Clubs had to adapt operations in order to implement some Principles. For example, Clubs' multi-program offerings and deep belief in the value of holistic youth development conflicted with the art-specific focus of YAI and Principle 2 (Executive commitment). Club leadership was accustomed to touting the many ways the Clubs support youth, and our interviews revealed that calling out the arts in isolation of other program areas in internal and public settings created tensions for Executive Directors and other Club leaders. Principle 4 (High expectations) also caused tension, as the Clubs' safe haven, drop-in culture conflicted with the level of routine engagement required for high-quality art skill development.

Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists) required Clubs to hire professionals, not generalists; pay them more than many other staff members; and allow them more autonomy and flexibility than other frontline Club staff. All the Clubs had existing arts programming in place; in some cases, the hiring of a professional teaching artist created tension with existing arts teachers. Additionally, Principle 3 (Designated

spaces) required dedicated spaces, not only for practical necessities such as storing supplies and projects, but to send a clear message on the value of the arts. However, Clubs' multi-program approach meant that space was frequently shared. Principle 3 (Designated space) required Club leadership to relocate other Club activities to create space for YAI.

Principle adaptations. In some cases, the Clubs also had to adapt these Principles to make them work in a Club setting. For instance, Principle 2 (Executive commitment) calls for a committed, deeply-engaged Executive Director; however, since Club leadership was multi-tiered, success required the buy-in of the entire leadership team. Further, the Executive Directors could not focus solely on YAI because they were responsible for multiple program areas, all with vested stakeholders. Similarly, Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists) focused on the teaching artists' professional abilities. Because of the Clubs' inclusive culture and the fact that many participants lacked arts experience, Clubs quickly learned that they needed to hire teaching artists with youth development skills as well as professional artistic experience.

While the remaining six Principles were more familiar to the Clubs, they still required Clubs to expand their existing youth development practices. Clubs did not experience push-back regarding these Principles. However, they did require the Clubs to think more expansively; while Clubs did not question how these Principles aligned with their practices and culture, they were challenged to implement them to a greater degree.

Clubs found that Principle 5 (Culminating events) fits with existing efforts to recognize success. Previous efforts, however, were mostly internal, and Clubs lacked experience organizing high-quality external, public art showcases and performances. Similarly, since Clubs already knew that allowing tweens and teens a voice and choice increased their engagement, they used youth input (Principle 7) as a key youth development practice. Clubs routinely asked youth about their interests, then used available resources to develop relevant programs. In YAI, Clubs were expected to expand these practices to include youth input on the design and day-to-day programming of the initiative. As a result, youth provided input on the chosen art form, the design of the YAI spaces, and the hiring of teaching artists. This led some Clubs to adopt more youth-inclusive hiring processes beyond YAI.

Principle 9 (Community engagement) was not new, either; Clubs had existing partnerships with schools, funders, non-profits, and businesses,

as well as robust parent networks. However, YAI required new or enhanced arts partnerships to bolster collaborative student training efforts, enhance exposure to professional arts, and design culminating events. Established arts partners reported that YAI strengthened their relationships with the Clubs, crediting the enhanced arts programming infrastructure with increased mutual benefits. Additionally, YAI required deeper parent engagement in order to ensure regular and full youth participation.

The necessary adaptations emerged as a result of YAI's focus on both quality and arts. The data demonstrate that the Clubs were pushed to broaden their thinking not only by the arts-specific nature of YAI, but by the facets of YAI focused on high-quality programming, including high expectations and an attendance commitment, content experts as front-line staff, professional supplies and equipment, and youth voice. In other words, the Clubs had to expand their practices to reflect higher levels of program quality. Quality elements could be as challenging for Clubs as arts-specific elements. For example, high expectations are an indicator of any quality program, not just art programs. But this quality feature was challenging to Clubs because it required youth to make an attendance commitment to an activity when other Club activities didn't require a similar commitment.

Further details about the necessary structural and procedural adaptations are discussed later in this report.

CROSS-CUTTING LESSON 2A

Transformative Principles laid the foundation of YAI; the other six built engagement and visibility.

As illustrated in Figure 7, **Principles 1 (Professional practicing artists), 2 (Executive commitment), 3 (Dedicated spaces), and 4 (High expectations) served as the foundation of YAI.** The development of this new type of program foundation was transformative for the Club.

PRINCIPLE N° 1
**PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICING
ARTISTS**

PRINCIPLE N° 2
**EXECUTIVE
COMMITMENT**

PRINCIPLE N° 4
**HIGH
EXPECTATIONS**

PRINCIPLE N° 3
**DEDICATED
SPACES**

Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists) and Principle 2 (Executive commitment) provided the human capital that built and sustained the initiative. Principles 1 and 2 built the foundation for successful implementation of the remaining Principles and informed efforts to align the program with Club's operational imperatives. Furthermore, these Principles served as the bedrock of the initiative, even after startup. As new tensions emerged and old issues resurfaced, leadership and teaching artists' tactical stewardship was essential.

Principle 4 (High expectations) represents the mindset shift required of Club leaders and staff for the successful implementation of a high-quality skill-development program. As described in *Something to Say*, high expectations in the YAI pilot permeated both art studios and organizational culture, and was practiced by both artists and organizational leadership in order to create a culture of high expectations. Similarly, in the pilot, the research reveals that this Principle influenced all aspects of the program, from art activities to Club-level infrastructure. Teaching artists had to maintain high expectations for youth to master artistic skills, and leadership had to espouse a culture of even higher expectations for youth and programming as part of their advocacy for YAI and the arts. YAI had access to resources that many other Club programs did not; this required Club staff to think bigger about studio equipment, design, and staffing. In the future, this Principle will also factor into YAI's sustainability. Club leaders must maintain high expectations and commit to resourcing space, equipment, and teaching artists at a level that will result in high-quality arts programming, despite the fact that Clubs typically operate in a resource-constrained policy environment that does not fully supply programs with the means to implement this level of quality.¹⁴

Principle 3 (Dedicated spaces) was the visible manifestation of quality and commitment to the arts. It alone visually symbolized the Club's commitment to high-quality art skill development. The YAI dedicated space, with its art-specific, technically appropriate current components and design and its welcoming, tween and arts-inspired décor, marked the Clubs' transition to a place where arts are valued equally to other activities.

While the remaining six Principles were not transformative, they cannot be overlooked. These programmatic building blocks were essential to the development of quality programming and served two functions in YAI: youth and community engagement.

¹⁴ See, for instance, McCombs, J.S., Kirby, S. N., & Cordes, J. (2012). Tough times, tough choices in after-school funding: Pathways to protecting quality (Working Paper No. WR-817-WF). Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WR817.readonline.html

PRINCIPLE N° 6
**POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS**

PRINCIPLE N° 7
YOUTH INPUT

PRINCIPLE N° 8
**HANDS-ON
SKILL BUILDING**

PRINCIPLE N° 10
**PHYSICAL &
EMOTIONAL
SAFETY**

Principles 6 (Positive relationships), 7 (Youth input), 8 (Hands-on skill building), and 10 (Physical and emotional safety) are all critical to youth engagement. These Principles, in addition to Principles 1 (Professional practicing artists) and 3 (Dedicated spaces), influenced tweens' decisions to become and stay engaged in the YAI skill-development classes.

Becoming engaged. Youth reported several reasons for deciding to try out YAI; they were influenced by the teaching artist and lured by the new, exciting space. Some youth reported that the 'wow' factor of the teaching artist contributed to their decision to try out an art class, and they felt excited and curious when the teaching artist was a real professional. One tween said, "[The teaching artist] actually danced with Kanye West and Beyoncé. I said—did you touch them?—and then I had to touch her."

But Principles 7 (Youth input) and 8 (Hands-on skill building) were also essential to high levels of early engagement, as participants were interested in the opportunity to contribute ideas about studio design and teaching artist selection. Teaching artists, particularly those in the technical arts, reported that youth were intrigued by the new, up-to-date equipment and wanted to explore the sewing machines, cameras, computers, and instruments.

Staying engaged. In order to maintain high levels of engagement, tweens needed hands-on skill building experiences (Principle 8), positive adult-youth and peer relationships (Principle 6), physical and emotional safety (Principle 10), and continued opportunities to provide input (Principle 7). Teaching artists reported that hands-on techniques kept youth interested, but youth reported that engagement dropped and relationships suffered when they felt a lack of instructional support. This sense of emotional safety also influenced participation. In a few instances, youth left the program because they did not feel emotionally safe. For instance, in interviews, youth mentioned concerns about being teased outside of YAI for something they did in class. They also struggled to feel safe when older non-YAI teens watched them in class through a window or door, or when they were not comfortable with the behavior of other classmates.

Principles 5 (Culminating events) and 9 (Community engagement) are critical for external visibility, support and recognition for YAI and its participants. These principles took YAI out of the Club and into the community. Culminating events created opportunities to recognize young artists, validate the importance of quality, and boost youth interest in the arts. Just as importantly, these events brought the work of YAI to parents, other Club staff, and members of the community. Culminating events also emphasized the program's focus on skill development, which had been absent from the Clubs' previous arts programming. YAI also required new and deeper engagement with community arts partners. Each Club was located in a different setting with a varied set of possible community

PRINCIPLE N° 5
**CULMINATING
EVENTS**

PRINCIPLE N° 9
PARTNERSHIPS

partners; nonetheless, across all Clubs, community engagement helped YAI bring its work to the broader community. Furthermore, family engagement helped parents understand how YAI was different from Clubs' typical programming.

CROSS-CUTTING LESSON 2B

Transformative Principles had to be implemented before programming began; the Essential Building Blocks of Quality were fully implemented later.

At launch, Clubs were given the opportunity to focus programming on just seven of the Principles. Principles 1 (Professional practicing artist), 3 (Dedicated spaces), and 4 (High expectations) were mandatory, and

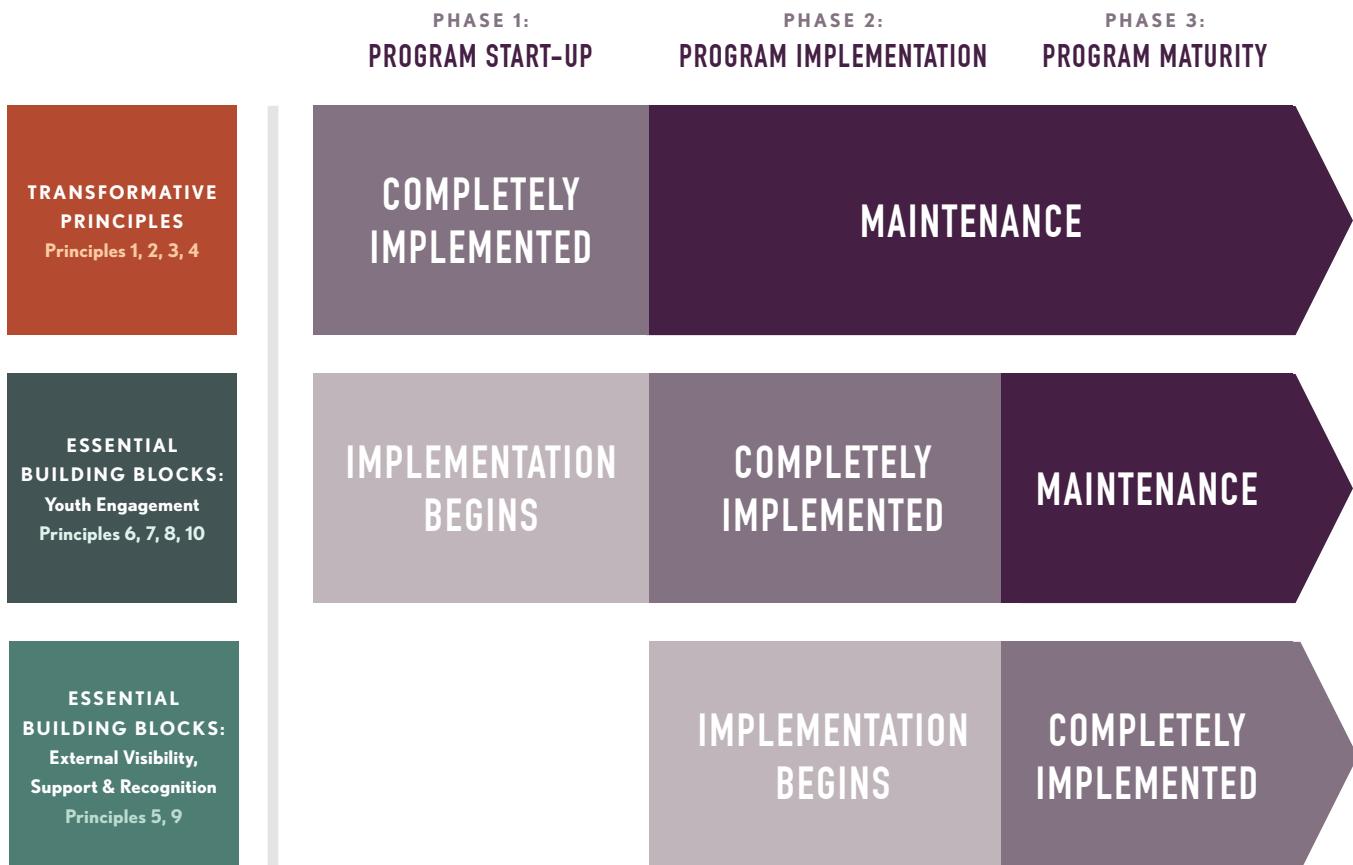
each Club selected an additional four. All Clubs chose to implement Principles 2 (Executive commitment), 8 (Hands-on skill building), and 10 (Physical and emotional safety), but their choice of remaining Principles varied. By fall 2014, Clubs were required to incorporate all Ten Principles into their YAI programming and approach.

While the Clubs were given some freedom to determine their initial guiding Principles, the experience proved that implementation of the Principles is ordered: Principles 1 (Professional practicing artist), 2 (Executive commitment), 3 (Dedicated spaces), and 4 (High expectations), which set the foundation for YAI, take time to execute but must be in place before the start of programming. Four of the six Essential Building Blocks of Quality—those key to youth engagement—must be implemented at launch. And the remaining two Essential Building Blocks—those associated with recognition and community engagement of YAI—cannot be implemented fully until the initiative is mature. The temporal relationship between the Principles is illustrated in Figure 8.

FIGURE 8

PRINCIPLE IMPLEMENTATION TRAJECTORY

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But each Principle also has multiple components, and the implementation of each is also fluid throughout the initiative, as depicted in Figure 8. For instance, although Principles 1 (Professional practicing artists), 2 (Executive commitment), 3 (Dedicated spaces) and 4 (High expectations) must be in place before the start of programming, their influence over the success of the initiative does not end there. Teaching artists and space are important for youth engagement and quality programming, and executive commitment and high expectations guide the path of YAI indefinitely. Similarly, while youth input is key to youth engagement and is an important part of quality programming, input into the design of the art classrooms and hiring of the teaching artist were implemented before programming began. And culminating events, while not fully implemented for external audiences until the initiative is mature, begin in early implementation as teaching artists and young artists host internal shows and performances.

Developing YAI's infrastructure happens in its pre-programming startup phase; this is when Principles 1 (Professional practicing artists), 2 (Executive commitment), 3 (Dedicated spaces), and 4 (High expectations) are focused on. They must be implemented fully before programming is launched. Principle 2 must be implemented first, as the Executive Director's commitment sets the tone for the initiative. The Executive Director must then design a larger leadership structure, hire teaching artists, and build support among staff. Professional practicing teaching artists must also be hired in advance of programming (Principle 1). YAI's early implementation also demonstrated that teaching artists provided essential input into space and equipment. When teaching artists were not involved in these processes, mid-course corrections were required. Furthermore, teaching artists needed time to acclimate to the Club culture, interface with other Club staff, and meet members. While teaching artists reported they could make due with less-than-optimal equipment, designated spaces (Principle 3) were essential prior to the start of programming. In YAI, when the space was incomplete and programming began in an alternate location, youth did not take the program seriously and did not stick with it.

Lastly, high expectations (Principle 4) must be in place and supported by Club leadership before programming begins as project leaders make initial implementation decisions. For instance, Club leadership and teaching artists need to keep high expectations for artistic skill mastery at the forefront of their budgeting process and allocate sufficient resources for expensive, professional purchases.

Clubs recommend that future YAI replications be given a six-month lead time to carry out pre-programming activities. YAI's startup was not that lengthy and required recalibration as Clubs completed initial tasks for the first three art forms. For example, Clubs attempted to renovate their spaces in one month and quickly learned they needed several. In addition, it took time to identify professional teaching artists with strong youth development skills. It also took time to develop buy-in from existing Club staff and to orient the teaching artists.

PRINCIPLE N° 7
YOUTH INPUT

PRINCIPLE N° 8
HANDS-ON
SKILL BUILDING

PRINCIPLE N° 6
POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS

PRINCIPLE N° 10
PHYSICAL &
EMOTIONAL
SAFETY

PRINCIPLE N° 5
CULMINATING
EVENTS

PRINCIPLE N° 9
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

Once the program is up and running, the Essential Building Blocks of Quality, particularly those that are critical for youth engagement, must be launched. These include Principle 6 (Positive adult-youth and peer relationships), Principle 10 (Physical and emotional safety), Principle 7 (Youth input), and Principle 8 (Hands-on skill building).

Teaching artists developed strong and positive mentoring relationships with youth and facilitated positive peer interactions in class (Principle 6). They created safe environments where youth felt comfortable expressing themselves, taking risks, and being creative (Principle 10). They also developed curricula that incorporated adult-guided youth input (i.e., youth have choices within the parameters provided by adults) and hands-on experiential learning opportunities (Principles 7 and 8).

The building block Principles that focus on creating external visibility, support, recognition, and community engagement—Principle 5 (Culminating events) and Principle 9 (Community engagement)—were only fully implemented as the program gained maturity. Teaching artists reported that youth were inexperienced in the art form and unprepared for a high-quality culminating event early in the initiative; as a result, teaching artists needed to build students' confidence, professionalism, and public speaking skills. Also, teaching artists reported that they had to develop rapport with participants before a culminating event with a public audience could provide them with a positive experience. This meant that, early in the initiative, they focused on internal culminating events, while public events with real audiences came later. Similarly, Principle 9 (Community engagement) was only fully implemented once YAI had resolved its initial implementation challenges. While parents were brought on as partners earlier in the initiative in order to facilitate participation, as we describe later in this report, community partnerships were used for many reasons, including as a pipeline for youth who aged out of YAI, for visibility, and for culminating events. These were important to the program only after the initial implementation challenges were addressed.



CROSS-CUTTING LESSON 3

YAI's resource infusion expanded Clubs' visions of quality skill-building.

Clubs were able to implement the Ten Principles for Success, expanding their vision of quality skill-building programming, because YAI was well-resourced. With funds from the Wallace Foundation, BGCA provided funding to each of the YAI Clubs. This funding was intended to cover 100 percent of YAI's costs (including space renovation, equipment/supply purchase, and other capital expenses) over the first three years of implementation. This allowed the Clubs—accustomed to operating under tighter financial constraints—to create and implement YAI at a higher level of quality than many other Club programs. Without these dedicated, generous YAI resources, Clubs would not have been able to implement the Ten Principles.

The infusion of resources created tension at first. YAI's resources paid for professional teaching artists, new technology and equipment, and customized, renovated, dedicated space—luxuries that other Club staff members and leaders wished they could have. YAI teaching artists felt this tension:

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I come in and I have this budget, and I have this ability to spend. [In] a lot of our Clubs it's actually the opposite. They're really looking for funds. I come in, and I've got six fancy new cameras and this room, and it's different from [other staff's] experience. So I think that caused a little bit of 'why does [the artist] get all this stuff? Why does she have a big nice computer and I don't have pens?'

Ultimately, the infusion of resources for YAI expanded Clubs' vision for quality programming. Club staff and leaders saw the benefit of the Ten Principles in action and acknowledged the value of professional front-line content experts, ample and updated equipment and supplies, and dedicated, youth-friendly space. In fact, by the end of the pilot period, leaders and staff in all three Clubs had considered the potential impact of infusing the Ten Principles more broadly into their programming.

According to one Club leader:

What struck us is what we've gotten from [the teaching artists] for [their salary]. There is a professional maturity, a depth and breadth of experience, no pettiness. They have a great can-do attitude. It makes me wonder what else we could do if we could pay [the same salary] for every staff position...there may be a time when we have a conversation with our board about this. Do you want to have pockets of extraordinary talent or do you want to have the whole organization be world-class? Almost every one of our board members has that attitude [toward quality] in their own work world...our work is no less important...

Despite this, the challenge of funding remains. Without a clear path for sustainable funding at a level equivalent to BGCA's support, Clubs were not confident that they could, in fact, implement the Principles more widely or sustain YAI beyond the pilot at the same level of quality. For instance, as the pilot drew to a close, and Clubs were beginning to raise matching funds for YAI, they started exploring less expensive implementation alternatives, such as having some classes taught by non-professional teaching artists and having teaching artists hold classes at more unit locations.



CROSS-CUTTING LESSON 4

The national office kept Clubs focused on the Ten Principles.

The national YSO supported the implementation of the Ten Principles and helped staff understand how YAI was different from “business as usual” in the Clubs. BGCA’s role in the pilot was critical, as many of the Ten Principles were superficially similar to existing Club practices but are, in fact, quite different. For instance, Principles 5 through 10 are universally relevant youth development principles, yet even those proved to be different from typical Club practices. YAI, with its emphasis on quality, skill development, and the Ten Principles, required deeper-than-typical BGCA involvement in Club-level program implementation to keep Clubs on track.

During start up, BGCA helped Clubs implement the Ten Principles according to the timeline required by the grant. All three Clubs reported receiving significant start-up support from BGCA in every aspect of the initiative. BGCA scheduled weekly phone calls with YAI leadership and teaching artists and frequently communicated, informally, between scheduled meetings. One Club staff member described his communications with BGCA as, “I’m getting a call from [one BGCA YAI staff] as I’m emailing [another BGCA YAI staff] on certain questions.” All three Clubs reported that frequent communication kept them focused and on track to meet deadlines, despite the short start-up period. One Club staff member said:

The direction—materials, meeting by phone once a week—was very helpful. I need that reminder to stay focused. It is really easy to get wrapped up in your own Club and the immediate problems. Focus on the Ten Success Principles. If anything, they have coached us not to forget the Ten Principles.

BGCA was particularly instrumental as Clubs made decisions about developing YAI space. Many Clubs designed their first spaces before they hired teaching artists. Clubs had limited arts expertise and no in-house knowledge of what professional art spaces should look like. The BGCA team, which was comprised of staff members with an arts background, helped Clubs design appropriate spaces. BGCA also advised Clubs to facilitate “charrettes,” or studio design conversations held with multiple stakeholders, including youth. They also included artists from the community if the teaching artist had not yet been hired. Early in the initiative, BGCA also guided Clubs through the

recruitment and hiring process and offered a webinar about how to craft the job description, advertise the position, and interview teaching artist candidates.

Staff at all three Clubs, particularly those responsible for the day-to-day implementation of YAI, such as the YAI liaisons who supervised the teaching artists, described BGCA’s involvement as extremely influential. One YAI liaison said, “Things would have been a lot different if we were flying solo.” According to some YAI leaders, BGCA forced Club leadership to “think outside of the box.” One BGCA staff member described the development of a YAI space:

[Club staff] are in regular Club mentality: how can we be as resourceful [as possible] and how can we put on a show with a nickel and a dime? We received design [proposals] that were like, we are going to buy those fold-out walls, and that way we can still have programming on the other side—and I said no, absolutely not, please revisit the Success Principles.

While BGCA’s pre-program support was instrumental, Clubs were accustomed to working independently and securing their own grants. Initially, Club leaders considered YAI a “typical” grant and were uncertain about BGCA’s intermediary role. As a result, Club leadership had to adjust their expectations. One Club leader stated:

BGCA reps have been more engaged than any other initiative in my experience. It’s a blessing and a curse. We are really good at normal grant delivery, so it would have been easier for us to know everything up front and have a timeline and benchmarks that we could plan against and use our own internal talent and experience to do this.

Nonetheless, key YAI implementers appreciated frequent contact with BGCA. BGCA successfully developed an intense, supportive relationship with pilot Clubs, and this kept Clubs focused as they expanded their existing practices, explored new systems, and resolved tensions that arose during implementation. As implementation advanced, BGCA took a step back and provided more strategic leadership by promoting promising practices and documenting lessons from the initiative’s expansion.

The rest of this report will detail the implementation of each Principle, with a particular focus on Cross-Cutting Lessons 2 and 2a.

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLES FOR HIGH-QUALITY ARTS: CREATING A FOUNDATION FOR YAI



03

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT THE FIRST FOUR PRINCIPLES—THE TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLES FOR HIGH-QUALITY ARTS—AND WAYS IN WHICH CROSS-CUTTING LESSON 2 AND 2A APPLIED TO THESE PRINCIPLES.

This section describes the adaptations necessary for successful implementation of each Transformative Principle. Each of the Principle sub-sections discusses:

- What the Principle looked like in a YSO;
- The function of the Principle in a YSO;
- The necessary adaptations for success in a YSO; and
- How to make the necessary adaptations.

Additionally, each Principle sub-section outlines promising implementation or alignment strategies. In some cases, implementation varied by art form; when it did, the findings can be found in pull-out boxes.

The Transformative Principles are not presented in numerical order; instead, they are organized according to their optimal order of implementation in the planning phase:

- Principle 2: Executive Commitment
- Principle 1: Professional Practicing Artists
- Principle 4: High Expectations
- Principle 3: Dedicated Spaces

Table 7 provides an overview of the findings presented in this chapter.

TABLE 7

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLES: FUNCTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS AT A GLANCE

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PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE IN THE CLUB	FUNCTION	ADAPTATIONS
PRINCIPLE N° 2 EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT	Multi-tiered leadership that involves both internal and external arts advocacy.	Human capital that creates the organizational foundation for high-quality arts by integrating the initiative into the Club and ensuring that the Ten Principles were implemented well.	Principle 2 was adapted to include leadership at all levels of the Club, not just the Executive Director. Principle 2 was adapted to acknowledge that leadership could not exclusively focus on the arts. Clubs modified supervisory and reporting structures so that the professional artists reported to the YAI liaison rather than the Unit Director like other Club staff.
PRINCIPLE N° 1 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICING ARTISTS	Instructors are professional artists with strong youth-development skills who are adequately compensated for their expertise.	Human capital that creates the programmatic foundation for YAI and ensured integration and visibility of YAI in the Club.	Clubs treated artists differently than typical Club staff—increasing pay scales, tightening hiring, allowing flexible working hours, and reducing the number of “regular Club duties” artists were required to take on in lieu of more programmatically-demanding YAI responsibilities. Professional teaching artists had to brand YAI work as a Club product. Principle 1 was adapted to incorporate an equal focus on youth development skills and artistic skills among teaching artists and to set more limited expectations for teaching artists’ continued professional work outside of YAI.
PRINCIPLE N° 4 HIGH EXPECTATIONS	Almost professional-level infrastructure. Programs focused on skill development and original artwork; expectations for regular participant attendance and professional behavior in the program.	Requiring all aspects of arts programming to reflect high standards—an expectation of quality for youth and from youth.	Clubs, which often operate in a resource-constrained environment, had to manage expectations for access to the professional-level infrastructure afforded by YAI. Clubs changed program scheduling to address conflicting program offerings and accommodate YAI’s attendance requirements. Principle 4 was adapted to allow artists to temper expectations for beginners and focus on youth engagement to encourage committed participation in a setting where other program options don’t require an attendance commitment.
PRINCIPLE N° 3 DEDICATED SPACES	Repurposed Club spaces designed to be professional, welcoming and dedicated art studios, ideally designed by teaching artists and with youth input.	Visible manifestation of commitment to quality and the arts which served to engage youth, Club leaders and community stakeholders in the program, create a sense of pride, and provide facilities necessary to practice the art form.	Clubs adapted to the notion of dedicated spaces for arts programs by allowing these spaces to go unused, even when programming was not in session. This was in contrast to their typical multi-purpose space practices. Clubs re-located other programs to make space for YAI. Principle 3 was adapted to acknowledge limitations of Club spaces, resulting in not-quite-studio-quality art spaces.

PRINCIPLE N° 2

EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT

TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLE

Executive Directors have a public commitment to high-quality arts programs that is supported by sustained action.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Multi-tiered leadership that involves both internal and external arts advocacy.

FUNCTION: Human capital that creates the organizational foundation for high-quality arts through ensuring fidelity of implementation and integration.

ADAPTATION: Principle 2 was adapted to fit a multi-tiered organization and a youth development organization with multiple program areas; Clubs modified supervisory and reporting structures for the professional artists.

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Overview: Internal and external multi-leveled leadership was essential to the successful implementation, integration, and sustainability of YAI. This differed from traditional models of leadership in arts-focused organizations, as Clubs adapted to the expectations of Principle 2 but also revised the Principle to 'fit' within the unit setting. YAI involved leaders at many levels of the organization, not just the Executive Director, all of whom played different types of advocacy roles. As the Club was not known as an arts education venue prior to YAI, effective leadership was necessary to oversee the smooth integration of the initiative, raise the profile of the arts through internal and external advocacy, and sustain the initiative. At the same time, it was necessary for leaders to balance those responsibilities with the unrelated needs of donors and staff invested in the Clubs' other program areas.

1. ARTS LEADERSHIP IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Arts leadership in a YSO is 1) multi-tiered and 2) focuses on internal as well as external advocacy for the arts. These two key characteristics are described below.

High-quality arts implementation required multi-tiered leadership.

Clubs are more complex organizations than those that focus exclusively on the arts. Because programming is spread across multiple units and programmatic areas, YAI leaders and staff recognized early in the initiative that engagement must extend beyond the Executive Director to each tier of the leadership structure (depicted in Figure 9).



FIGURE 9

STRUCTURE OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE ARTS IN THE CLUBS



When CEO or executive director support is strong and public, not only do arts programs receive adequate attention and resources, both staff and youth get the message that what they are doing is valued—and the organization will continue to support and invest in their efforts.

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Responsibilities of each leadership type are described below:

- The **Board and Executive Director** advocated for the importance of arts in youth development, articulated how high-quality arts education aligned with the mission of the Club, and promoted the arts for its sustainability.
- **Other senior leaders** were selected by each Club to lead YAI based on their current responsibilities, interests, and skills. These leaders, including the Director of Operations, Marketing Director, Chief Strategic Officer, and Senior Director of Strategy & Measurement, played a large role in day-to-day project leadership and spent a significant amount of time attending to YAI. At the launch of the initiative, these leaders established a precedent for high-quality programming by hiring professionals, building dedicated studios, and purchasing professional-grade equipment and supplies. Later, they mitigated big-picture tensions between typical unit operations and YAI, supervised the YAI liaison, and kept the initiative on the Executive Directors' and Boards' dockets. In sum, these leaders focused on the internal change management activities necessary to maintain YAI's focus on high-quality art skill development. One Executive Director explained how much time the initiative took from his leaders: "[YAI] is demanding. Four of my six top people have some to a lot of engagement."

- **Unit Directors** managed day-to-day unit operations including supervising all staff, planning the schedule of activities, overseeing and supporting staff during daily programming, managing the use and maintenance of facilities, developing neighborhood partnerships, recruiting youth, and interfacing with the rest of the Club on behalf of their unit. Their leadership roles were not initially identified as critical to the success of YAI, and this was a key misstep. As units struggled to integrate teaching artists, meet participation goals, and implement program plans, the importance of the Unit Directors' role became clear. Because they managed the spaces needed for YAI to run, their advocacy within the unit was essential to the program.
- **YAI liaisons** supervised the teaching artists and were responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the YAI program. As Club staff members, liaisons possessed a strong understanding of the organization and its culture. They planned and monitored activities, supported the artists, organized culminating events, and developed and maintained parent engagement and community partnerships. Two of the three Clubs chose a staff member with experience in the arts, believing that this prior knowledge would allow the liaison to supervise the teaching artists more effectively; the other Club selected a veteran staff member who, having served as the Club's impact assessment coordinator, was knowledgeable about grant management and data collection.

Arts leadership in a YSO was both internal and external facing. Club leadership engaged in external arts advocacy to build arts into the Club brand and secure resources necessary for sustainability. However, in a YSO with many programs, a tight budget, and few substantive arts experts, this unique initiative also required a formidable level of internal advocacy. One Executive Director, explaining the importance of internal advocacy, said, “As leadership, we set the tone for the culture of the organization by creating visibility around work and supporting kids in their efforts.” The internal and external advocacy activities of leadership are described in more detail below.

Informal and symbolic engagement from the Executive Director was important. Executive Directors expressed support by attending YAI events and incorporating YAI programming into their youth development pitches. One Executive Director participated annually in YAI’s culminating event, even dancing with the tweens onstage. Another Executive Director periodically visited YAI programs to speak with teaching artists and participants. In the third Club, the Director communicated with the teaching artists frequently and informally, often asking them about upcoming events. All three Executive Directors acknowledged the importance of ensuring that teaching artists felt valued. According to one Executive Director, “They are unique players in our organization, and so you’ve got to be a little more intentional about lovin’ on them.”

Club leaders communicated internally about YAI, the Ten Principles, and their alignment with the mission of the Club. YAI brought new resources, new methods, new staff, and new attention to the arts in general. Communication between YAI, other staff members, and Club leaders was critical; while many of the Principles seemed familiar, Club leaders positioned YAI within the context of the Club and emphasized the differences between YAI and business as usual. To achieve this, leadership expressed a purposeful message about the role of arts education in positive youth development outcomes. Executive Directors played a key role in this respect, strategically and explicitly communicating the connection between YAI and the mission of the Club.

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Club leaders created visibility for the arts and YAI. This was a key strategy intended to elevate YAI and arts in general. Liaisons and other leaders worked with teaching artists to showcase participants’ artistic achievements through performances and displays. At two Clubs, teaching artists and liaisons posted YAI artwork and announcements to the unit’s digital message board. Executive Directors also ensured that the arts and YAI were a consistent topic of conversation. As one YAI staff member described,

[The Executive Director] went from the top down and said, ‘You know what, [YAI’s] an agenda item at all of our executive team meetings. It’s going quarterly to the board. It should be on every single huddle.’ So, he’s kind of giving the doctrine saying: We’re educating everybody on everything YAI.

Club leaders built external support as a community arts education provider. Before YAI, Clubs were not seen as providers of high-quality arts programming in their communities. This challenged Club efforts to recruit youth, cultivate new and existing partnerships, and secure funding. A key goal of external advocacy for the arts was to build each Clubs’ profile as a high-quality art skill-development provider for youth in the community.

Club leaders began to secure sustainability. External advocacy was key to raising funds for YAI and establishing the Boys & Girls Clubs as the beneficiary of those funds. As the initiative matured, Executive Directors used public speaking opportunities to advocate for the arts and for Clubs as high-quality arts education providers. Club leaders discussed YAI in the context of their mission and positioned the program as a response to relevant community needs. They also leveraged YAI’s successes—including studios and products—to demonstrate important outcomes to potential donors. Once the initiative was off the ground, Clubs used traditional and social media outlets to promote culminating events and share information.

2. LAYING THE FOUNDATION: ORGANIZATIONAL HUMAN CAPITAL

Leadership laid the foundation for YAI by managing the Ten Principles' implementation, resolving subsequent conflicts with the Club's culture and structure, and by integrating YAI into the Club and unit. These foundational activities are described below.

Ensuring fidelity of implementation. As described above, Club leaders, particularly other senior leaders working with liaisons, made key decisions about how to implement the Ten Principles in the Club setting. They determined the structure of the initiative and the role of the liaison, situating each within the existing organizational framework. They also selected the art forms, hired teaching artists, determined when and how to involve youth in decision-making, and allocated resources, all while maintaining high expectations. With limited arts expertise on staff, they relied on feedback from BGCA to align their decision-making with the Ten Principles.

Ensuring integration. Key to YAI's foundation was its "fit" within the Club. When tensions between the Ten Principles and Club culture surfaced, leadership was responsible for solving them—either by modifying Club operations or by adapting the Principles. Executive Directors and other senior leaders were responsible for changing organizational policies and procedures and managing the liaisons and Unit Directors who addressed daily integration challenges (such as communication between teaching artists and Club staff).

Unit Directors had a unique role in facilitating daily integration of teaching artists and the Ten Principles. While the liaison was responsible for supervising the teaching artist and managing the program, the Unit Directors had the power to change unit operations to facilitate daily integration of the Ten Principles. Unit Directors in YAI:

- Ensured that YAI and other high-interest tween programs were not scheduled simultaneously and therefore did not compete for tweens' participation;
- Served as a hub of information about unit activities, community events, and members' backgrounds, and identified when unit activities or youth challenges might impact YAI programming;
- Implemented new policies and protocols for YAI. For instance, one teaching artist requested frequent field trips, often without advance planning, to be responsive to youth interests. His liaison helped him create an open field trip parental consent form, and the Unit Director made a van available to the class on short notice;
- Supported youth participation in YAI by identifying possible participants and reminding committed youth to go to class. Unit Directors also recruited youth for the unit, which expanded YAI outreach to non-members;
- Reinforced the standards of safety and respect for youth as artists. Unit Directors' approach to safety in the unit had implications for YAI participants' safety when they were outside of class;
- Served as cheerleaders for YAI with the unit's front-line youth development workers, whom Unit Directors supervised.

Table 8 displays promising and innovative strategies used by the multiple tiers of leadership in the pilot Clubs to generate internal and external support for the initiative.

TABLE 8

PRINCIPLE 2 (EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
ENGAGING A MULTI-TIERED LEADERSHIP TEAM	Executive Director and other Senior Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite Unit Directors to participate in all YAI planning meetings. • Update the board regularly and invite them to culminating events.
	Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that YAI is included as an agenda item on all internal organizational meetings. • Participate in a YAI class or culminating event. • Check in with teaching artists informally.
	Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with teaching artists to create and disseminate artwork that is meaningful to YSO staff. For example, fashion design or visual arts students make unit uniform shirts, visual art students develop a birthday portrait of the Executive Director, and music students develop a special birthday song for the Unit Director.
ESTABLISHING INTERNAL ADVOCACY FOR THE ARTS	Unit Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit YAI classes to hang out, talk to youth about their artwork, and/or participate. • Showcase youth artwork regularly and throughout the unit. For example, play music created by YAI youth over the speaker system, put dance or video art on the unit's TV monitors, and place a visual art installation in the unit.
	Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teaching artists to hold master classes at the unit. These classes, led either by the teaching artist or an invited high-profile artist, can attract other community partners and students to the YSO to participate in the class.
ESTABLISHING EXTERNAL ADVOCACY FOR THE ARTS	Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect YAI artists with arts-interested donors and arts organizations where they have connections.

3. ADAPTATION OF PRINCIPLE 2 AND THE YSO'S CULTURE AND STRUCTURE

Principle 2 (Executive commitment), as originally designed and implemented, was not aligned with Club culture and leadership structures. It required changes to the Principle as well as changes within the Club. As previously described, the definition of committed leadership had to be expanded beyond the Executive Director for the initiative to be successfully implemented and integrated into the Club. Two other modifications—one to the Club structure and one to the Principle—are discussed below.

Clubs had to modify their reporting and supervisory structure for YAI.

In YAI, teaching artists were supervised by the YAI liaison, a staff person who worked across units. In contrast, other front-line staff—those working directly with youth—were supervised by the Unit Director. The novel reporting structure was adopted in part because: 1) the liaisons were more senior in the Club and would be in a better position to advocate for and supervise the professional teaching artists; and 2) YAI teaching artists had responsibilities that the Unit Director could not oversee given their day-to-day responsibilities of running and managing the unit itself.

Since there was no direct reporting relationship between the teaching artists and the Unit Director, there were frequently miscommunications, and this resulted in frustration among Unit Directors. For example, Unit Directors did not always know when the teaching artist would be on site. Teaching artists did not always recognize the importance of attending Club staff meetings—which were mandatory for other staff supervised by the Unit Director—causing tensions that negatively impacted Unit Directors' perceptions of the initiative and the teaching artists.

The reporting structure also created confusion for the teaching artist. They felt that, in practice, they had two supervisors—the Unit Director, whom they had to keep informed of programming and their schedules, and the liaison, who oversaw all elements of the program, including performance reviews and curriculum development. Ultimately, as YAI became more established, Clubs started considering moving towards a revised supervisory structure where the Unit Director alone served as the supervisor for the teaching artist.

Club leaders had to balance their time and advocacy across multiple program areas.

The original expectation of Principle 2 was for Executive Directors to pay significant attention to the arts. However, the multi-service nature of Clubs challenged this expectation and required modification. Staff members were initially concerned that Executive Directors and other leadership would overlook other program areas. In addition, Club leadership struggled with how to raise the value of the arts without downplaying other program areas, including programs that were of high interest to funders, such as academic support. In fact, arts staff reported that the Clubs traditionally undervalued the arts and that sports were a higher priority for youth and parents. As the initiative matured, a wide array of Club leaders worked to shift organizational values to embrace the arts. For instance, one Club developed “signature initiatives” across all of their core program areas that would receive attention from leadership and were afforded greater emphasis in the Club’s budget. As a result of these efforts, staff across all Clubs reported that the value of arts in the Clubs was raised without a negative impact on other Club programs.



4. HOW TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADAPTATIONS

Club leadership was the lynchpin of YAI's success; they had to gain buy-in for the initiative from other Club staff, parents, and the community by explaining the initiative, articulating how it was aligned with the Club's mission, and overseeing YAI's unique supervisory structure. Teaching artists, while not responsible for the Club leadership's advocacy for the arts, also could play a role in their engagement. We identify strategies for addressing these alignment tensions below.

Leadership must:

- **Articulate YAI's alignment with the YSO's mission.** The Executive Director and other Club leaders promoted their vision of how YAI's goals aligned to broader Club goals. In turn, Club leadership was able to gain buy-in and justify the amount of time and attention paid to the arts in YAI. By the end of the pilot, Club leaders in YAI were beginning to articulate the initiative's alignment to social-emotional learning and 21st century skills. One Executive Director said that it was his responsibility to "expand the value equation."
- **Actively manage structural alignment of YAI with the YSO.** Leadership needs to explore the best supervisory structure for YAI and assess the pros and cons of having teaching artists supervised by someone other than the Unit Director. In YAI, this challenge was mitigated by cultivating intentional communication between the Unit Directors and the YAI liaisons.

Teaching artists can:

- **Intentionally cultivate leadership engagement.** Teaching artists can also help leaders stay focused on the importance of the arts to youth and to the organization's mission by actively cultivating leadership's engagement in their work. Creating artwork for leadership to hang in their office and inviting them to participate in culminating events are two easy ways to deepen leaders' engagement in YAI.

PRINCIPLE N° 1

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICING ARTISTS

PRINCIPLE 1

Instructors are professional practicing artists and are valued with compensation for their expertise and investment in their professional development.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Professional artists with strong youth development skills who are adequately compensated for their expertise.

FUNCTION: Human capital that creates the programmatic foundation for YAI and ensures integration and visibility of YAI in the Club.

ADAPTATIONS: Clubs adapted their pay scales, hiring practices, and work role expectations for the professional artists. Clubs and artists adapted expectations regarding professional work, branding and work style. Principle 1 was adapted to incorporate a focus on youth development skills and more limited expectations for artists' continued professional work.

Overview: Professional artists were essential to success, but their presence created the greatest tensions. The YAI model centered on the professional practicing teaching artist—artists with strong portfolios and professional experience that were both credible and exciting to young people. These highly-qualified staff members bore the primary responsibility for providing high-quality arts programming and were also expected to facilitate their own successful integration into the unit. YAI's teaching artists were fundamentally different from other front-line unit staff because of their professional background, compensation, responsibilities, and relative independence. Although the OST literature points to the importance of highly-qualified staff,¹⁵ they are often financially out of reach to YSOs in resource-constrained environments. Because of this, the implementation of Principle 1 created the greatest tensions in YAI. Both teaching artists and Club leaders had to adapt in order to implement Principle 1.

1. TEACHING ARTISTS IN A YSO:

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Teaching artists were professional artists with strong youth development skills. Professional practicing artists were hired by Clubs to implement high-quality art skill-development programming for tweens. Teaching artists had broad professional backgrounds, including:

- A dancer who choreographed a popular television show;
- A film producer who worked with public television and won an Emmy award; and
- An audio engineer who produced music for various rap artists.

¹⁵ Bodilly, Susan J. and Megan K. Beckett. Making out-of-school-time matter: Evidence for an action agenda. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG242>

Professional, practicing artists hold the key to youth engagement in OST arts programs. Young people are drawn to the artists' knowledge of technique, their real world experiences in the arts, and their energy and creativity. Professional artists have deep understanding of the creative process. ...Of course, to be effective teaching artists also must have the desire and skills to work with youth.

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These professional artists had the credibility and ‘wow’ factor that tweens wanted. YAI participants consistently rated the artists as strong teachers of their art form,¹⁶ and Club staff recognized that they were more skilled and professional than Club staff members who taught arts and crafts.

Art skills were initially the most important hiring criteria, perhaps due to the newness of the focus on the arts, but Clubs soon recognized that the “fit” of the teaching artist within the Club culture was just as important as their arts experience—if not more so. Teaching artists with minimal experience serving youth, who did not have a strong personal commitment to youth and to arts education, and/or who could not manage a classroom struggled to provide high-quality programming and sometimes left the position. In addition, teaching artists from backgrounds unlike those of their students sometimes lacked cultural competency. As a result, replacements for teaching artists who left had more experience in youth programming, and those that stayed on requested additional youth development training. One unit experienced difficulty identifying and retaining teaching artists

at the start of the initiative; two of their four artists left within the first year. Afterwards, the Club focused on hiring professional artists who had strong youth development skills, were comfortable working in a low-income neighborhood, and had strong cultural competency.

Two Clubs faced additional challenges when they hired teaching artists from outside their cities. While the Clubs ultimately found solutions, they learned that these teaching artists lacked knowledge of the local arts community.

Teaching artists were adequately compensated for their expertise. Clubs paid teaching artists for their expertise according to the market rate for artists in the community. Teaching artists confirmed that this compensation made them feel valued: they appreciated receiving an appropriate salary and benefits in a permanent position. Teaching artists were also offered robust professional development opportunities in the arts and/or in youth development. For instance, some teaching artists attended the National Guild for Community Arts Education’s annual meeting.

¹⁶ This data is provided in the section entitled “Cross-Cutting Lesson 1.”

2. LAYING THE FOUNDATION: PROGRAMMATIC HUMAN CAPITAL

Teaching artists were expected to provide high-quality arts instruction and integrate themselves and their programming into the culture of the Club. These foundational functions are described below.

Ensuring implementation: Teaching artists were responsible for YAI programming. YAI's success depended on the teaching artists, who were responsible for planning and implementing high-quality programming with more components and considerations than had been typical for the Club, including high expectations, skill building, quality culminating events, community partnerships, the serious integration of youth input, and utilization of sophisticated equipment. Teaching artists reported needing more planning time than other staff required. While pre-packaged curricula were sometimes available through BGCA, they were rarely used. Artists were expected to draw on their own experience to develop their own curriculum, which added to their workload. Many artists had to complete art form-specific tasks such as editing videos, cutting audio tracks, measuring wood for frames, purchasing supplies, and making other preparations for classes or culminating events. Several visual artists described a 1:1 ratio of prep time needed per hour of programming. Artists also had to participate in the YAI learning and reporting activities with BGCA and their local team. Finally, because Principle 1 originally assumed that artists would continue "practicing," teaching artists expected adequate time to continue their professional activities outside of YAI.

Ensuring integration: Teaching artists were responsible for "pitching in" and raising YAI's visibility in the Club. As mentioned in the previous section, YAI's secure foundation required successful integration into the Club. Some of this responsibility rested on the teaching artists who personally represented the initiative within the Clubs. While BGCA originally envisioned teaching artists having few to no general unit responsibilities, units and teaching artists quickly learned that the degree of YAI's integration depended upon the extent to which teaching artists "pitched in" at the unit and demonstrated a willingness to become "part of the team." These activities increased their visibility and bolstered staff perceptions of their commitment to the Club. Pitching in included supporting snack and dinnertime as well as "hanging out" in the unit to develop relationships with youth and other Club staff. Teaching artists were also expected to attend weekly staff meetings and support unit-wide events, and they received invitations from other unit staff to conduct joint projects—making a video with another unit group, for example.

Figure 10 depicts the responsibilities that YAI teaching artists were required to balance.

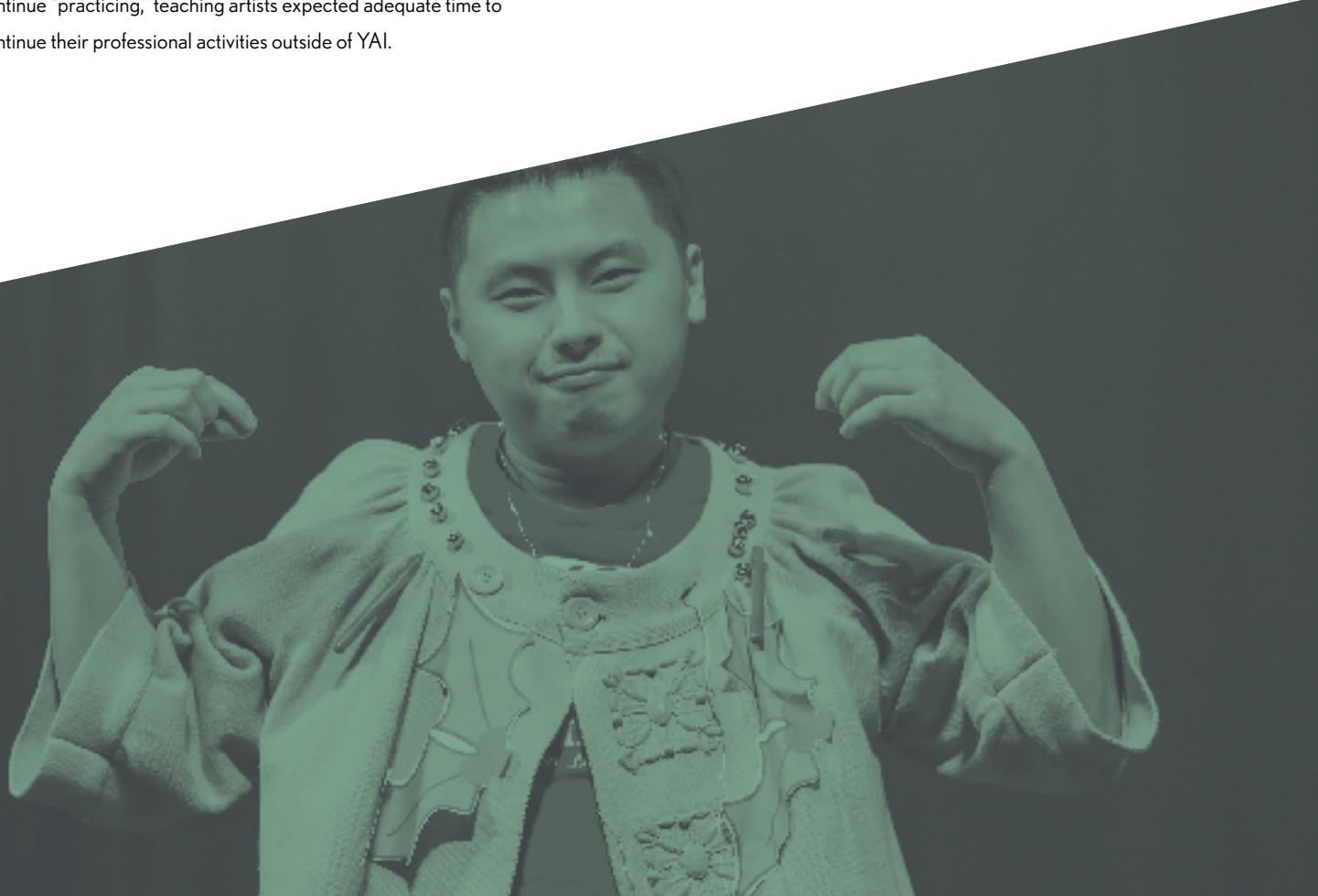
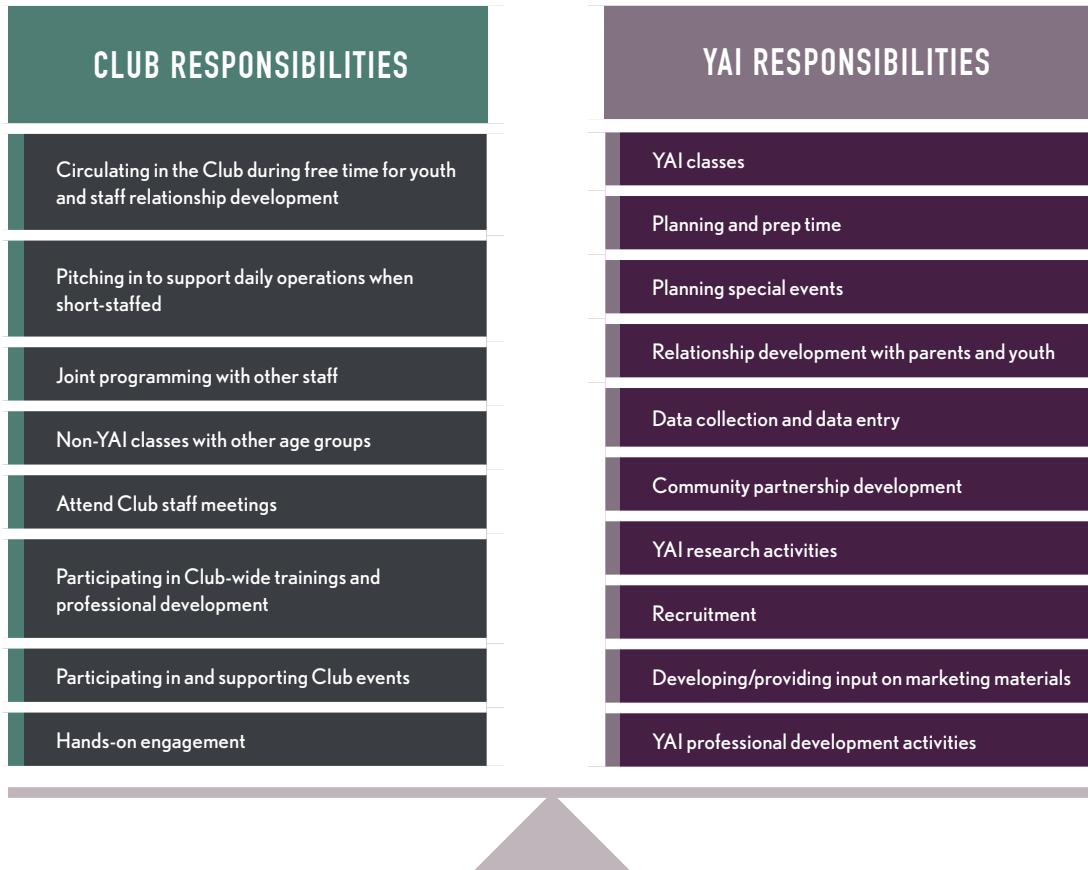


FIGURE 10

YAI TEACHING ARTIST RESPONSIBILITIES



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As a result of balancing YAI, unit, and professional responsibilities, ten of the twelve teaching artists active in the program in spring 2016 reported challenges with their workload, and five reported feeling overwhelmed. Teaching artists most frequently reported challenges creating outside artwork, allocating sufficient time to prep for classes and culminating events, and maintaining “visibility” in the unit. Teaching artists who lacked support from their liaison or clarity about their responsibilities also experienced challenges. For instance, as the initiative matured, teaching artists were in high demand as units expected them to contribute their skills to unit events and projects. However, some teaching artists were able to work with their liaison to ameliorate these competing priorities. For example, one liaison crafted specific guidelines for the teaching artists about the scope of their work and communicated these boundaries to other unit staff members. Nonetheless, teaching artists reported that they routinely worked during non-work hours to ensure that they met their vast responsibilities.

Part-time teaching artists struggled to fulfill their YAI responsibilities in 20 hours per week. YAI employed two models: a full-time teaching artist and a part-time teaching artist. Clubs experienced successes and challenges with each model. Full-time teaching artists spent more time in the units and were, therefore, frequently better integrated into the unit. Full-time teaching artists also had time outside of programming to recruit new students and develop positive relationships with members. Some teaching artists and Club leaders also identified benefits unique to the part-time model; teaching artists found the part-time model appealing because it provided time for their own art work, while full-time teaching artists struggled to maintain it. Club leaders also appreciated it for being less costly. However, several part-time artists reported feeling stress from the acute pressure to complete all their Club and YAI responsibilities in 20 hours a week. Many part-time artists struggled to engage in the unit the way full-time artists could, which had implications for their integration into the unit and for their relationships with youth. Two Clubs determined it

TABLE 9

PRINCIPLE 1 (PROFESSIONAL PRACTICING ARTISTS) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
HIRING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING ARTIST	YSO Leadership <i>(National Office, Executive Directors, other Senior Leaders and Liaisons)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve both YSO staff (at organizational and local levels) as well as potential or current participants. • Review resumes and interview for youth development and classroom management experience as well as art experience. • Have potential hire conduct a demo class as part of the interview process—have YSO members participate and provide feedback. • Use networks of local arts organizations and national arts forums to find candidates. • Include salary information in the job description. Publishing the teaching artist salary in the job description resulted in a more robust candidate pool in one Club. However, it required conversations with Club staff to explain why salaries were higher than the normal salary structure would allow.
ENHANCING TEACHING ARTIST VISIBILITY	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate prior to the start of programming or during snack/meal times to: 1) get to know staff and their programs, and 2) interact informally with youth. • Regularly attend staff meetings. • Open YAI fieldtrips up to other staff. • Set up formal, regular meetings with the Unit Director. • Invite YSO staff to participate in culminating events. • Make artwork visible/audible using displays, internal events, loudspeakers (for music), monitors (for recordings of dance routines or visual arts), etc. • Create art for the YSO: create t-shirts for Club staff, develop a YSO promotion video, paint the walls with colorful murals, etc. • Collaborate on projects that are meaningful to the site and other YSO staff/youth.
BALANCING YAI, UNIT AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEACHING ARTISTS	Other Senior Leaders, Unit Directors, and Liaisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as the conduit through which YSO staff can request the teaching artist's assistance. • Be an advocate for the teaching artist by staying abreast of his/her schedule and goals for the class.

was advantageous to change part-time positions to full-time positions because artists could serve more youth (within the same unit or two units) and have more prep time.

Table 9 displays promising and innovative strategies that leadership can use to hire effective teaching artists and that teaching artists can use to enhance their visibility in the Club.

3. ADAPTATION OF PRINCIPLE 1 AND THE YSO'S CULTURE AND STRUCTURE

Of the Ten Principles, Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists) was most at odds with the typical Club structure and culture, though Club staff also recognized it as a key "game changer" for quality in YAI.

Necessary adjustments included:

- Clubs had to adjust their pay scale to accommodate YAI's teaching artists;
- Clubs had to recognize and make adjustments for teaching artists' myriad responsibilities;
- Clubs and teaching artists had to reconcile differences between the Club and the teaching artists' professional brands;
- Clubs and teaching artists had to accommodate their varied work styles and culture;
- Clubs had to modify their hiring practices to find teaching artists that were a good fit; and
- Teaching artists had to pitch in at the unit to gain acceptance.

Each of these adaptations is discussed in more detail below.

Clubs had to adjust their pay scale to accommodate YAI's teaching artists. Teaching artists' salaries were higher than other Club salaries, a fact that caused tension with other staff. In two Clubs, artist salaries exceeded even the salary of the Unit Director. This level of compensation attracted a strong pool of candidates, including artists from outside the community who, in some cases, moved to take the position. However, salary structures in the youth development field are not as robust, and other unit employees often earned minimum wage in part-time positions. According to one Club leader, "From day one, we knew that there would be tensions regarding artists' salaries as they compared to Unit Director's salaries. Our other coordinators are specialists in the field as well."

This tension, which affected morale in all three Clubs and led to concerns about sustainability, mirrored the larger OST field where staff quality and retention continue to be significant issues. The prevalence

of low wage, entry-level jobs in OST results in high turnover rates, which ultimately undermine the quality of programming. National OST experts advocate for the professionalization of the workforce through increased training and credentialing, increased salaries, and the identification of key competencies needed for high levels of performance in the youth development field.¹⁷ Indeed, most Club leaders recognized the professional teaching artists' unparalleled expertise and acknowledged that the caliber of their programming surpassed many traditional Club offerings. Nonetheless, within the current policy environment, which arguably under-values youth workers, Clubs were not confident they could maintain such high salaries once the initial philanthropic funding went away. Although Club staff and Unit Directors continued to provide professional support, tensions within the Club about this salary differential remained.

Clubs had to recognize and make adjustments for the myriad responsibilities of YAI's teaching artists, who had to pick up non-YAI responsibilities to "fit in." Early in the initiative, unit staff did not have a thorough understanding of the YAI program, nor were the differences between the roles of other Club staff and those of the teaching artists made explicit. As a result, unit staff did not understand that teaching artists might not be available to chip in at the last minute or attend unit meetings routinely. At first, this tension resulted in less support for YAI and teaching artists. One teaching artist, emphasizing that the staff did not understand his obligation to continue professional work, said:

I'm a mentor in [the art form] and much more. It felt like I was a prima donna [to other staff members], that I had my set hours [for class] and then ran out the door. [Other unit staff did not know] the reason that I was running out the door was because I was going to second shift. Basically, I think that would be the only flaw—the lack of understanding from the rest of the [unit's] personnel, that [we] are truly working artists, outside of the program itself.

Further contributing to this disconnect, the teaching artists' responsibilities often made it challenging for them to "pitch in" like regular staff members. Recognizing that teaching artists had heavy workloads, YAI assigned them few general unit responsibilities. However, Club leaders and teaching artists quickly learned that it was essential to "pitch in" to gain acceptance as team members. By the end of the study period, some part-time and most full-time teaching artists were expected to

¹⁷ Ellen Gannet and Elizabeth Starr, "Quality Out-of-School Time," National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2016. <https://www.wcwonline.org/pdf/factsheets/QualityOSTpolicy.pdf>

help serve dinner, escort members into the building, monitor youth between programs, and/or clean up non-YAI unit spaces. Many teaching artists reported that these general unit duties were distracting, reduced their prep time, and conflicted with the Ten Principles. For example, one teaching artist was asked to oversee snack time, even though it cut into her required YAI programming time.

YAI programming further impacted teaching artists' ability to "pitch in." For example, one unit used walkie-talkies to communicate with staff, notify them when member parents arrived for pick up, and inform them of operational challenges. It was not possible for the dance teacher to use the walkie-talkie while dancing, and she frequently missed messages or failed to answer calls. Unit Directors, accustomed to calling staff as needed, were frustrated by what they initially perceived to be a lack of flexibility. However, by the end of the study period, Unit Directors had a better understanding of the teaching artists' responsibilities and reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with almost three-quarters of the teaching artists' participation in their units.

Clubs were required to modify their hiring practices to accommodate teaching artists. Clubs found that typical hiring practices were not always optimal for identifying the best fit teaching artist, so Clubs had to find new ways to announce available positions, make new connections to promote their availability, and include youth in the hiring process. One Club even changed their job description because the teaching artist did not have a college degree in a relevant field, which was a requirement of the Clubs' staff.

Clubs and teaching artists had to reconcile differences between the Club and the teaching artists' professional brands. At a minimum, Clubs and teaching artists had to figure out how and when to represent their own brand or the Club brand, and questions arose:

- Can teaching artists involve Club members in their own professional art projects? For example, one artist involved YAI youth in a public art project that he was professionally commissioned to do.
- Can teaching artists use their work with YAI participants for their own promotional purposes? For example, one artist put videos developed with youth on a personal website.
- Who did the teaching artist represent—the Club brand or his/her own professional brand—in public events and places? For example, one Club raised questions about artists cultivating community partnerships both for the Club and for their own professional work



- Can teaching artists host professional events in the Club and/or YAI events in their professional spaces? For example, one artist regularly hosted culminating events at his own professional art studio, which allowed YAI participants a more professional space to display work. Another artist used Club space to host professional events which YAI youth were invited to attend.

The Clubs and teaching artists had to strategically address these questions as they arose. In two Clubs, leaders and teaching artists successfully reconciled both brands by putting agreed-upon terms in writing. One of those Clubs also reframed its employment agreement with the teaching artist as a “merger,” drafting an agreement about YAI work time and leave time for professional artwork and documenting it within the teaching artists’ employment file. Another Club changed the language in the teaching artists’ contracts to assign the Club ownership of all YAI work.

Because they worked with youth, many teaching artists censored or monitored the adult content of their professional work, especially art that was risqué, profane, or thematically related to drugs, alcohol, or violence. Three teaching artists postponed or turned down professional opportunities that would have involved content inappropriate for members. Two did not allow students access to their complete body of professional artwork, and another did not use his professional name at the Club. Two artists reported paying careful attention to their social media posts. Finally, some teaching artists did not use YAI participants

for their professional projects because YAI participants’ work or behavior was unprofessional and might reflect negatively on the artists’ professional brand.

Clubs and teaching artists had to accommodate their varied work styles and culture. Teaching artists often came to the Club with different professional experiences than Club staff and, therefore, had different expectations. Many of the artists were entrepreneurs or business owners accustomed to setting their own schedules and working independently. The Club culture, however, was much more regimented, and YAI’s schedule sometimes denied artists the flexibility to respond to professional opportunities. For example, one teaching artist requested three weeks off to prepare for a professional event, and while the Club refused the request, the artist and the Club were able to agree on a shorter leave period.

Many teaching artists attributed delayed or limited activities in YAI classes to the constraints of “red tape.” Teaching artists were required to adhere to Club policies and move through approved channels when organizing field trips and ordering supplies. To address these “red tape” challenges, Clubs simplified their procedures and provided extra support to teaching artists struggling to navigate them. In two Clubs, teaching artists developed their own strategies. In one Club, for example, the teaching artist developed a relationship with the purchasing agent to abbreviate the procedure while still maintaining protocol. When another teaching artist needed a flyer, typically

produced by the Club's marketing manager, she made it herself, then submitted the design for approval and feedback.

Clubs and teaching artists had to modify their expectations regarding professional work outside of YAI. As part of their job responsibilities, teaching artists were expected to continue professional work in the arts. Some teaching artists fulfilled this requirement by dancing in a troupe, painting community murals for local non-profit organizations, or working for a dance company as a guest choreographer.

The pressure to seek out professional opportunities that would not conflict with their teaching schedules created tension for the artists, many of whom already struggled to balance their responsibilities within the Club. Half of the teaching artists surveyed in spring 2016 said they did not have enough time dedicated to their own professional artwork and reported cutting back to accommodate their YAI obligations. To address this challenge, some teaching artists changed the form of their professional artwork. For instance, one dance teaching artist had to stop choreographing for an ongoing TV show when he was hired for YAI. He replaced this professional artwork with shorter-duration, discrete choreography projects that he could work into his Club teaching schedule. Others integrated Club projects into their professional work. One artist, for example, taught tweens to create art for his contracted, professional installation.

4. HOW TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADAPTATIONS

Professional practicing teaching artists were instrumental to YAI's success, but their presence in the YSO created tension. Addressing this required strategic responses from Club leaders and teaching artists.

Leadership must:

- **Provide the teaching artist with adequate adjustment time.** After YAI clubs brought in the first cohort of teaching artists, they learned that it took several weeks to a month to acclimate artists to Club policies, procedures, and culture. In addition to learning about the Club and unit, the teaching artists needed this time to build relationships with youth, staff, and parents before starting the program.
- **Explain the goals of YAI, as well as the unique requirements of the teaching artist's role, to YSO staff.** When speaking to Club staff, it was important for Club leaders to explicitly introduce the role of the teaching artist with the same specificity used for the introduction of high-quality art skill development and the Ten Principles. Without a firm understanding of the teaching artist's many responsibilities in the classroom and community, staff were less supportive of the teaching artist and the program—and, according to teaching artists, staff support was instrumental to their success and the success of their students.



- **Adjust expectations for teaching artists' unit responsibilities in light of YAI's unique demands.** In order to integrate artists into the unit, it was necessary for them to become part of the team. At first, Clubs expected artists to attend unit staff meetings, assist with typical unit operations, adhere to Club rules and policies, and support other unit staff. While teaching artists did "pitch in," they sometimes felt these roles conflicted with their teaching goals. Others wanted to do more, but needed further guidance: they reported, for example, being assigned dinner duty without knowing the rules and procedures for serving. Furthermore, some teaching artists, particularly those working part time, found it hard to find time to form relationships with youth outside of YAI. Lastly, staff and leaders often added to their already-full plates by requesting the teaching artists' expertise for other projects. It is incumbent upon YSO leaders to set manageable parameters around the teaching artists' workload, engaging them tactically in roles that will build on their existing responsibilities.
- **Adjust YSO policies to reflect the unique expectations of teaching artists with diverse professional backgrounds.** Teaching artists differ from YSO staff in many ways: they may not have typical educational credentials; they have established professional brands; and their position requires ongoing participation in their artistic field. These factors required the Clubs—and will require other YSOs—to evaluate the flexibility of their policies and adjust them accordingly. At a minimum, YSOs will need to consider their approach to hiring, contracts, and flex time.
- **Streamline organizational processes to allow for more responsive programming.** In YAI, Clubs changed or modified procedures to accommodate YAI programming, which was sometimes more spontaneous, field-based, and materials-dependent than other Club programming. For instance, one Unit Director bypassed typical requisition procedures by using a gift card to purchase last-minute supplies for an upcoming class.

Teaching artists must:

- **Be visible in the site and "pitch in" where needed.** While YSO leadership must place reasonable limits on the extent to which teaching artists are called on for support, teaching artists were more appreciated by unit staff when they offered assistance. In order to join the team, teaching artists must have time outside of class to work in the site, visit other programs, and collaborate with YSO staff on projects aligned to YAI goals.
- **Communicate directly with directors and other YSO staff.** It was critical that teaching artists took the initiative to share their schedules with the Unit Director as well as with their supervisors, the liaisons. Furthermore, teaching artists benefited when they felt supported by the Unit Directors and other staff members; promoting YAI events, sharing evidence of student progress, and inquiring about the successes and challenges of other programs could nurture these relationships.

PRINCIPLE N° 4

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

PRINCIPLE 4

There is a culture of high expectations, respect for creative expression, and an affirmation of youth participants as artists.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Almost professional-level infrastructure, programs focused on skill development and producing original artwork, and the expectation of an attendance commitment.

FUNCTION: Requiring all aspects of arts programming to reflect high standards—an expectation of quality for youth and from youth.

ADAPTATION: Clubs had to adapt to a professional-level infrastructure; Clubs had to adapt Club-wide tween program scheduling to allow for a YAI attendance commitment; Principle 4 was adapted to respond to the drop-in culture and achieve a careful balance of high expectations and youth engagement.

Overview: From the start, YAI maintained high expectations at every organizational and programmatic level, but full implementation required Clubs to change their practices. Principle 4 was operationalized at both the Club (organizational) and YAI (programmatic) levels. While YSOs espouse high expectations for youth behavior and outcomes, they do not usually enforce attendance requirements and are not typically resourced at the YAI level. Therefore, the Club and YAI both had to adapt. Club adaptations centered on addressing tensions created by a new professional-level infrastructure for the arts and the need to adjust Club-wide program schedules so tweens could make an attendance commitment to YAI. High expectations in programming had to be carefully balanced with strategies for youth engagement because of the voluntary participation norms in the Club.

1. HIGH EXPECTATIONS IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Establishing—and meeting—high expectations required programming focused on skill development and original artwork. This required tweens to make an attendance commitment and abide by high standards for student behavior. Over time, teaching artists learned the value of differentiated expectations and one-on-one adult support to help participants meet expectations.

High expectations, which facilitated skill development and the creation of original artwork, distinguished YAI from other tween arts programming. The focus on skill development meant that teaching artists needed to teach technique, provide time to practice, encourage youth to be detail-oriented, and foster creativity. As two artists described:

I encourage them and move them into really getting out of their comfort zone. They want to jump into the performance aspect, but they don't want to do the work of

the technique. When I was 10, I didn't want to do pliés. So I understand, I had to do it... So they have a good technique class, which is high expectations, I think. And they have time for peer-to-peer interaction when they're creating their own work. I try to balance it out that way.

These next performances are more detail-oriented. They are working on performance values: Facials, how to convey emotion; texture, like, 'Is the movement smooth or is it staccato? Is it strong? Is it soft? How close am I to the

ART FORM DIFFERENCE:

TECHNICAL ART FORMS

Teaching artists in technical art forms (e.g., art forms that required specialized equipment) reported the most difficulty implementing high expectations. They scored lower than others in this area and also rated themselves poorly. In addition, youth participants in technical arts programs self-reported comparatively lower levels of effort and persistence than participants in other art forms.

Interviews and observations revealed several possible explanations. First, teaching artists in the technical art forms reported a steep learning curve related to the use of the art form's equipment. Teaching artists may not have been able to advance youth as far or as quickly as they would have liked. At the same time, students in technical art forms had more "down time" than youth in other art forms. Educating young

artists on the use of the equipment required a high degree of individual artist time and attention. Technical artists worked with groups of six to eight, but circumstances often restricted their attention to one student at a time. Teaching artists often found themselves providing technical assistance (e.g., troubleshooting computer issues, guiding youth with cameras, or unjamming sewing machines). While the teaching artist was helping one student, other students were often on hold until they could get the teacher's attention and help. Therefore, participants may not have felt that these classes required much effort. Finally, there was often only one piece of large equipment, such as a video camera or recording studio, which meant that students had to take turns. Again, because the teaching artist could work with groups of two or three, the rest of the group was often left to idle observation.

[Participants] are expected to attend sessions regularly, be engaged, work hard, and demonstrate respect for themselves and others.

DENISE MONTGOMERY, PETER ROGOVIN, & NEROMANIE PERSAUD

SOMETHING TO SAY: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts

ground? How high am I in the air?" They are working on shapes: 'Are all my shapes the same as my teammates?' They are working on formations in relationship to space and other bodies: 'Where am I in this formation, and why? I'm tall—is that the reason why I'm in the back this time? I'm shorter—is that the reason why I'm in the front?' Being conscious of what it is to be on stage as a professional dancer.

Artists also emphasized the need to teach youth how to produce high-quality work:

I want the kids to know the difference between a quality project and something that they're just going to put a couple of hours in and then call good enough. Because a "good enough" project could be turned into something exceptional with added energy and time. I think that if they can start learning that, it'll go a long way.

Youth were also given regular opportunities, according to their art form, to create original work. For example, dance participants played choreography games and designed their own routines, while film students developed topics and storyboards.

Skill-development expectations could be differentiated. Over time, teaching artists recognized that it was both necessary and possible to differentiate their expectations for participants; they expected a greater level of commitment and more advanced skills from some tweens. Most tweens knew very little about the art form when they entered the class, but teaching artists soon recognized the need to develop leveled classes as participants progressed; this prevented skilled tweens from spending time on the basics when new participants joined. It also kept beginners from feeling intimidated by more advanced tweens. Similarly, enthusiastic tweens had an opportunity to be rewarded for that enthusiasm by progressing to a more advanced class.

Skill development required adequate one-on-one adult support.

Participants valued this support and, at times, became frustrated and discouraged when it was not available. Teaching artists observed that one-on-one time with tweens fostered more artistic growth, explaining that their days with smaller groups were most effective. However, this created a tension regarding the number of youth artists could serve. One artist explained, "If I just worked with [one specific youth] for one day, we could knock out three songs, but I don't have that opportunity."

Additionally, one teaching artist reported that a Club policy prohibiting staff from being alone with youth in unit spaces challenged her ability to provide individual instruction.

Expectations included regular attendance and positive behavior. While specific attendance policies varied by artist, participants were generally expected to attend every skill-development class throughout the session unless they had an excused absence. Some teaching artists did not allow participants to continue after three unexcused absences. Others incentivized attendance. The specific attendance policy, the extent to which the policy was enforced, and the degree of flexibility that was provided varied by artist. Nonetheless, other Club staff recognized commitment as a distinguishing characteristic of YAI; as one non-YAI Club staff member stated, "Kids need more commitment for these [YAI] programs [than other Club programs]."

Teaching artists also established a code of conduct that held youth to high behavioral expectations, but the content and specific expectations varied widely by artist.

2. LAYING THE FOUNDATION: SETTING THE STANDARD

Of all the Principles, quality is most explicitly addressed in Principle 4 (High expectations). Adherence to this Principle ensured that high quality remained a focus not only in programming but also across all of the other Principles. Below, we describe Principle 4's standard-setting

function in staffing, space and equipment, as well as high-quality events and community engagement.

Focus on quality: staffing, space and equipment. Leadership maintained high expectations as they hired teaching artists, developed art spaces, and purchased equipment. YAI staff and artists described a desire to offer youth an almost professional-level experience. To that end, they collaborated with professional artists when designing the space and purchasing equipment. One teaching artist explained, "I am trying to create a real world [studio], so when the kids walk into a [real] studio, it should be a familiar setting because it looks like something they've worked in. I want it to be real, but also comfortable."

YAI's high expectations were robustly funded. This allowed Clubs to "think big" about program requirements such as recording booths for digital music and green rooms for film. Additionally, as addressed within the discussion of Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists),

these resources allowed Clubs to offer high salaries to qualified teaching artists.

Focus on quality: Culminating events and community engagement. Club staff maintained high expectations for culminating events and community partnerships. As will be discussed later in this report, Club leaders and teaching artists struggled to define "high-quality" culminating events and evaluate youth readiness. High expectations also positively affected community engagement. According to community art partners in two Clubs, this focus on quality strengthened their pre-existing relationships with the Clubs by better aligning the Clubs' goals with those of the partner organization.

Table 10 displays promising and innovative strategies that teaching artists can use to implement high expectations in YAI programming.



TABLE 10

PRINCIPLE 4 (HIGH EXPECTATIONS) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
CONVEYING HIGH EXPECTATIONS IN PROGRAMMING	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include a daily routine to help youth adjust to the practice demands of the class. For example, in one dance class youth would learn a warm-up routine that they would do when they arrived. Ultimately, youth would do their warm-ups and stretches themselves.
ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE AND COMMITMENT TO PROGRAMMING	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentivize attendance. Many artists used incentives, such as food, field trips, days off/down days, and culminating event participation, to reward an attendance commitment. Implement a structured YAI participant application process to encourage recruitment and attendance. An application process ensured that both youth and teaching artists held the same high expectations and could work towards them together. Two teaching artists that utilized the application strategy had record numbers of applicants and had to generate a waiting list. This also conveyed to youth participants that their involvement in the program was special.

3. ADAPTATION OF PRINCIPLE 4 AND THE YSO'S CULTURE AND STRUCTURE

In theory, Clubs could establish high expectations, a culture of respect for creative expression, and youth affirmation practices in alignment with existing goals. Ultimately, however, Principle 4 was challenging to implement, and success required changes to Club operations and the YAI vision. Specifically:

- Clubs needed to embrace the professional-level infrastructure;
- Units needed to tactically schedule tween programs and enforce YAI's attendance commitment to ensure that participants learned art skills; and
- To retain participants and compete with other program offerings, teaching artists had to balance their high expectations with engagement Principles.

Each is discussed in more detail below.

Clubs needed to embrace the divergence of YAI's professional-level infrastructure from the resource-constrained culture of the Club. Club staff were accustomed to being creative with limited resources, but as one Unit Director explained, YAI was different:

What's different is the actual use of professional equipment. I think that's the major piece—the cameras, the video recorders, mechanical pencils, the easel... The kids actually get to feel, they get to hold, they get to manipulate those pieces of equipment. In any program in a Club setting, money is always an issue. [But] I've actually seen kids sitting in a chair that's conducive and ergonomically set up for them to draw. That's something different, to actually have a sketch pad, not just a piece of blank paper. Those things are, I think, unique within themselves.

According to teaching artists, these additional resources occasionally prevented them from feeling entirely part of the Club. One artist explained,

I think there were also some misgivings: I come in, and I have this budget, and I have this ability to spend. A lot of our Club is actually the opposite. They're really looking for funds. I come in, and I've got six fancy new cameras and this room, and it's not what their experience is. So I think that that caused a little bit of 'what does she get all that stuff for? Why does she have a big nice [computer], and I don't have pens?'

Club leaders were also concerned about their ability to sustain this high-quality infrastructure within the constraints of a limited budget. We will revisit this in our discussion of Principle 8 (hands-on skill building).

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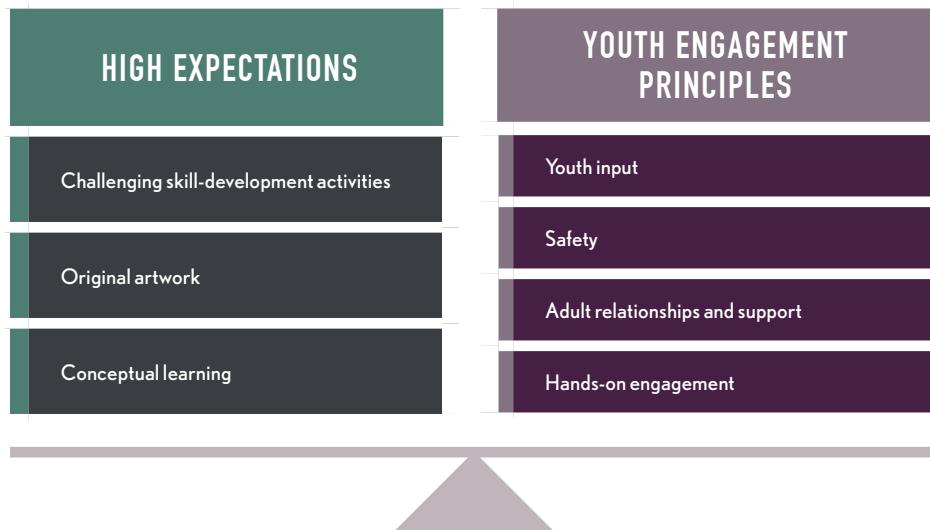
Clubs needed to tactically schedule tween programs and enforce YAI's attendance commitment to ensure that participants learned art skills. The attendance commitment, a hallmark of YAI, was required to ensure that participants had sufficient time to learn art skills. However, this commitment was challenging to enforce due to the Club's voluntary, drop-in culture, complex schedule, and broad selection of interesting activities, many of which were offered simultaneously. In addition, parents were accustomed to scheduling pick-ups at convenient times, such as on the way home from work, despite the fact that YAI programs ran at specific times and youth were expected to be present for the whole program period. At first, teaching artists struggled to adjust to these scheduling challenges, but as the program progressed, parents and Club staff recognized the benefits of the program and began to accept the attendance requirement.

In addition, Clubs valued their ability to provide youth with a well-rounded experience. Units offered multiple, simultaneous tween activities, and Club staff believed that there was value to youth experiencing and participating in different programs. The YAI attendance commitment, however, made participants less available for other unit programming. In addition, other grant-funded Club programs for tweens had attendance and participation targets, and this resulted in some competition between YAI and other programs. Third, YAI's two-hour blocks conflicted with some units' regular one-hour program rotation, causing YAI participants to miss out on other unit activities and creating scheduling challenges between YAI and the unit's dinner schedule. To address these challenges, units had to schedule YAI and other high-interest tween programs carefully in order to avoid logistical and participatory conflicts.

To retain participants and compete with other programs, teaching artists had to find a careful balance between engagement strategies and high expectations. The availability of many other tween activities, the voluntary nature of Club participation, and the targeted age group meant that YAI teaching artists, perhaps more than artists in community arts

FIGURE 11

THE BALANCE OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT



organizations, had to temper their high expectations with a focus on youth engagement. The “engagement” Principles, which addressed relationships with peers and artists, hands-on activities, youth input, and physical and emotional safety, attracted participants and helped to retain them. However, it was difficult for teaching artists to maintain high expectations while focusing on these Principles, as overemphasizing key engagement strategies could detract from the goals of the class. This balancing act is depicted in Figure 11.

For example, teaching artists reported that they needed to establish positive relationships before they could push youth to high levels of artistic skill development. In addition, youth reported that their peers could get frustrated and drop out of the skill-development class if high expectations were not coupled with adequate one-on-one support. One youth said:

Sometimes [the teaching artist] doesn't have enough time for everybody because she is only one person. There are eight different people in the room, so you don't get very far every day with your project and have to keep working on it all the time. That's what I want to change.

Youth also became discouraged if feedback from the teaching artist was not provided in developmentally appropriate ways. For instance, youth in one YAI class were frustrated when the teaching artist punished them for not performing well by taking away food for a planned celebration.

Teaching artists also tried to balance youth input (Principle 7) with high expectations. Ideally, artists wanted youth to have choices and input as they developed their skills. Participants dropped out when the projects did not align with their interests, but at times, teaching artists allowed youth to make decisions without boundaries. For example, participants in one YAI class convinced the teaching artist to let them spend significant amounts of time watching YouTube videos, a strategy that yielded little skill development.

Teaching artists also learned that they needed to balance conceptual instruction, which is a hallmark of high expectations, with hands-on activities (Principle 8). Several artists developed elaborate curricula to teach art concepts before launching into hands-on activities, but quickly abandoned it in favor of immediate hands-on instruction, as they needed engagement for conceptual instruction. One teaching artist said:

The first week, I came in with a curriculum. When the kids came in, I saw the look on their faces: 'Oh no, I'm in school.' I was concerned about meeting expectations as far as educating kids—that's what I was here for, to educate the kids in this form. Then I readjusted based on asking them questions [like] 'What did you get out of this?' [...] Based on that, I tried to remember when I was [a kid], what enticed me to come in, and it was this idea of having fun. I tried putting the curriculum down low and the word fun on top, and that's what I implemented. I asked the kids, 'I have this thing that we have to do, any suggestions on making it fun?' That's where things started to become more engaging.

Youth agreed that having input into the curriculum made YAI more engaging. One YAI participant stated, "When he started just doing lessons on things at the beginning of class, I didn't like it. But now, he makes it fun. Before, it seemed boring and it didn't feel like he was teaching, just telling us."

Because of this balancing act, some teaching artists faced a steep learning curve. However, by the end of the pilot, program observations showed that a majority of artists (63%) were on track in their implementation of high expectations. Artists that continued to struggle with high expectations often struggled primarily in relationship to their classroom management.

4. HOW TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADAPTATIONS

Club leadership was responsible for ensuring Clubs adapted to the opportunities and demands of YAI's high expectations, but they did not work alone. Teaching artists helped youth and parents understand and meet these expectations, and this required flexibility.

Leadership must:

- Establish and articulate high expectations at the organizational level.** These expectations had to extend beyond the programmatic level to new organizational ways of thinking and operating. High expectations in programming, developing space,

establishing partnerships, hiring teaching artists, and conceptualizing culminating events all challenged Club staff to think differently than they were accustomed to when administering programs with fewer resources. Leaders were responsible for helping other Club staff to shift their thinking and understand these expectations which, in turn, facilitated YAI's implementation and integration into the Club.

- Ensure YSO staff support the YAI attendance requirement.** YSO staff should look for youth who are supposed to be in class and remind them to attend. Additionally, other staff members should work with the teaching artist to avoid competition over students.
- Manage program scheduling to reduce competition.** Unit Directors set site schedules and can reduce or eliminate competition between high-interest activities

Teaching artists must:

- Reach out to parents to ensure they understand the YAI commitment.** Teaching artists can mitigate tensions around attendance by reaching out to parents who are unfamiliar with the attendance commitment and accustomed to picking up youth according to their schedule. Parents of engaged youth who observed culminating events and developed a better sense of YAI requirements generally accommodated the attendance commitment.
- Work with other YSO staff to avoid competition and establish some flexibility in their attendance requirement.** Teaching artists learned that they needed to accommodate unit field trips and unexpected activities or events. Some teaching artists also worked with youth and other Club staff to identify high-interest, non-YAI programs popular among their core participants and negotiate schedules that allowed youth to attend both activities.

PRINCIPLE N° 3

DEDICATED SPACES

PRINCIPLE 3

Arts programs take place in dedicated, inspiring, and welcoming spaces, and affirm the value of art and artists.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Repurposed spaces that are professional, welcoming, and dedicated to the arts, ideally designed with teaching artist and youth input.

FUNCTION: Visible manifestation of commitment to quality and the arts which served to engage youth, Club leaders, and community stakeholders in the program, create a sense of pride, and provide facilities necessary to practice the art form.

ADAPTATION: Clubs adapted to the notion of dedicated space for arts programs, which challenged their traditional multi-purpose space practices. Principle 3 was adapted to recognize the limitations of Club spaces which did not allow for full studio-quality functionality.

Overview: Dedicated, inspiring, and welcoming art spaces served as the visible manifestation of the Club's commitment to arts and quality, increasing YAI's visibility and appeal but also challenging the Club's multi-purpose space practices. The new art spaces—two per unit—were a significant advancement for Club arts programming and a key contributor to youth, Club, and community engagement. While the YAI spaces were a source of pride for the program, they were limited by the constraints of the unit building itself: rooms were not always in the optimal location or the right size, and artists felt that they were not quite studio quality. In addition, unlike other unit spaces, they were completely dedicated to YAI and not available to other programs. Unit Directors played a key role in maintaining and explaining the need for dedicated art space to other Club staff.

1. DEDICATED AND WELCOMING SPACE IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Within each unit, dedicated and welcoming art spaces were created from existing, repurposed spaces and designed to have a professional, welcoming feel. Teaching artists didn't always have input into the design of the spaces, but Clubs learned that they should have been involved. Each of these key characteristics are discussed below.



YAI spaces were repurposed from existing, somewhat limited unit spaces. In some cases, these spaces were already vacant or had limited use. Others were in use, and programs moved to accommodate YAI. For example, one large basement space in an older unit building had been used as a rifle range in the past and was used as an overflow gym space for youth at the time YAI was launched. This space was transformed into a dance studio.

Clubs convened design charrettes to develop a vision for each of the art spaces. These charrettes involved Club leaders, staff, and artists with relevant expertise. Youth were also involved in the design charrettes and provided input regarding the look of the space. Clubs then hired architects and contractors to design and build out the spaces.

Since unit space was limited, some aspects of YAI's repurposed spaces were often not ideal. For instance, while it was best for skill-development classes to locate studios in low-traffic areas with minimal interruptions, this isolated teaching artists from the "hub" of the unit—reducing their visibility, the visibility of their students' skill development, and their opportunities to connect with their colleagues in the unit. At the same time, when program spaces were centrally located, teaching artists and participants often struggled to establish the privacy necessary for students' emotional safety. This issue is discussed in more detail later in this report.

Second, many YAI spaces were small, and when filled with necessary equipment and work stations, could only accommodate about 10 participants per class (with the exception of two of the three dance classes, which were larger and did not require technology). In addition, some programs could have used larger spaces; film classes, for example, needed larger spaces to film from appropriate distances. Youth frequently reported wishing that their YAI spaces were a little larger.

Clubs wanted youth to feel ownership of professional-looking, welcoming spaces. Clubs allocated sufficient resources to attain a professional look and feel, including appropriate flooring for dance classes, a green room for filming, sound booths for recording, utility sinks for cleaning paint brushes and containers, desks or office space for teaching artists, and adequate storage space for supplies and equipment.

...When organizations dedicate specific physical areas to their arts programs, they signal to youth that those classes are valued and worthy of participation. And they set the tone for an affirming environment steeped in creativity, productivity, and achievement.

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Spaces were also designed to be welcoming. They were painted in bright colors, prominently displayed student and professional work, and included lounging spaces. Artists also facilitated youth ownership: visual artists allowed students to paint murals on the walls, and the fashion design class created curtains to increase their sense of privacy. One artist explained: "I say to the students, 'this is your space, so take care of [it]. That falls in line, I think, with that feeling of safety as well."

Participants reported feeling welcomed and comfortable. One youth called the YAI space her "cozy area," adding that, "It's comfy." On youth surveys, participants reported that the art studio made them feel excited about the art form.¹⁸

Teaching artists were not always involved in the design of the space, but they should have been. Clubs learned that they should have waited to start the space design process until after the teaching artist was hired. Even when they received input from artists in the community, the teaching artists often had their own vision, or considered the space from both the artistic and youth development perspectives. Consequently, some spaces were redesigned once the teaching artist came on board. One teaching artist explained: "Well, there were plans in motion before I started and some kind of budget plans for purchasing gear. I was glad to be exposed to that when I was able to, because there were lots of things I disagreed with, and was able to change plans."

A liaison commented: "I think it's necessary to have artists on board before the design charrette, or at least in the design, to get their expertise."

2. LAYING THE FOUNDATION: THE VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND THE ARTS

YAI's spaces were the first visible manifestation of the Club's commitment to high-quality arts. The spaces were designed to meet the unique needs of each art form at a near-professional level. Consequently, they attracted attention from Club staff and youth and were critical to early engagement—particularly early recruitment. The spaces also engaged Club leaders, for whom they were a source of pride, and community partners, who viewed these professional spaces as a sign of the Club's commitment to high-quality arts.

Demonstrating a commitment to quality and the arts: engaging program participants. According to Club leaders and youth participants, studio spaces were key to youth engagement. One leader stated, "The design of spaces is critical. The kids want to see a space that's special—that's specific for that art form. That 'wow' factor is really exciting for the kids."

One youth described increased interest among her peers once the dance program moved from a temporary space in the snack room to the completed studio:

We went the first day...all of us went in that small [snack] room. A lot of [participants] were there but then a lot left—it was not cool. What is weird is that a lot of people want to join now that we have the studio. People left when they thought we would be in the snack room for a long time, but now we have a studio.

¹⁸ This data is provided in the section entitled "Cross-Cutting Lesson 1" on page 43.

Demonstrating a commitment to quality and the arts: Club leaders and community stakeholders. The YAI spaces became a source of pride for Club leaders, who held ribbon-cutting ceremonies to draw attention to them and made them a highlight of donor tours. The YAI spaces impressed community donors, who viewed them as evidence of the Club's commitment to youth and the arts. One community partner said:

I can't believe the things they went into to get a dance studio. I mean, people fight for dance studios. To commit to that much—to a space like that for kids—has to be great for the kids—but that's just a tremendous commitment for [the Club] to make. It just makes me very happy to see what these kids are doing.

Table 11 displays promising and innovative strategies used by Club leadership and teaching artists to build high-quality, safe, welcoming spaces and develop youth ownership.

TABLE 11

PRINCIPLE 3 (DEDICATED SPACES) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

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GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
DESIGNING HIGH-QUALITY SPACES	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite youth, YSO staff, and artists to share their visions in design charrettes. Facilitate conversations by asking participants what they would do with an unlimited budget, then ask about non-negotiables that would still be essential on a shoestring budget.
CREATING WELCOMING SPACES	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate YAI space from "school space" by creating warm, welcoming studios that include lounging areas, or "chill-out zones," with soft couches, bean bags, or coffee tables. Youth enjoyed congregating in these areas before class and on breaks. Instructors also used the spaces to gather youth for discussion.
INCREASING YOUTH OWNERSHIP	Teaching Artist and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow youth participants to provide input on simple things. Allow them to choose paint colors and select artwork for display and furniture for chill-out zones. Youth enjoyed feeling ownership of these spaces.
CREATING SAFE SPACES	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust spaces according to student needs and personalities. Teaching artists in visual arts programs noticed that their rooms attracted quiet, introverted youth who expressed appreciation for the calm spaces and used them as safe havens from the rest of the Club. • Reduce distractions: Use curtains on windows to block the view of other youth.

3. ADAPTATION OF PRINCIPLE 3 AND THE YSO'S CULTURE AND STRUCTURE

Successful implementation of Principle 3 required Clubs to adapt their operations and teaching artists to adjust their expectations. Key adaptations required for high-quality space included:

- Providing dedicated studios in each unit, instead of using multi-purpose spaces;
- Relocating other programs to meet the need for dedicated space; and
- Getting teaching artists to adapt to the fact that spaces were generally not studio quality.

These lessons are discussed in more detail below.

Several Clubs launched YAI within a multi-purpose space, but by the end of the pilot, all Clubs had adapted and provided dedicated studios.

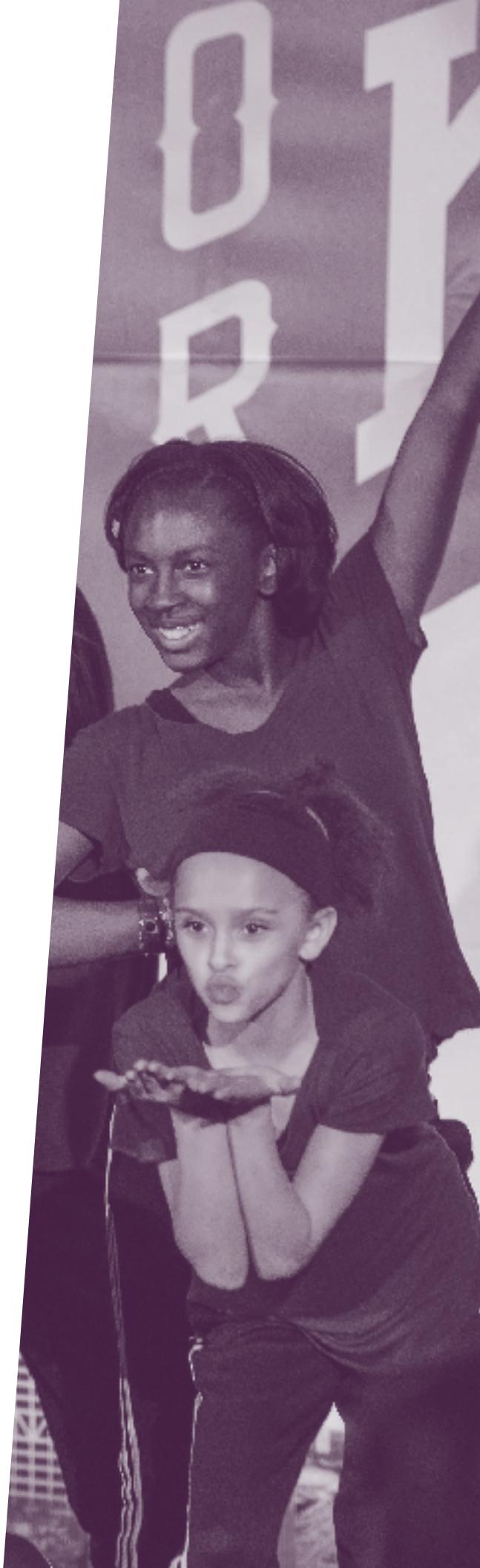
The concept of multi-purpose space was deeply entrenched in several Clubs, particularly those that did not have access to open, unused space. These Clubs launched YAI within existing multi-purpose spaces. In one school-based unit, the teaching artist shared space with the school's art teacher. Another unit placed the digital music program in a shared space with its technology program. These classes encountered challenges, and the experience reinforced the importance of dedicated space. Teaching artists and other YAI staff needed extra time to set up and clean up when using shared spaces. One Unit Director observed a difference when the teaching artist moved from shared to dedicated space: "He now has a [dedicated] space where he can do mural art and let it dry, and the kids can see the progress on his work, and it's cutting his set-up time in half."

The teaching artist agreed, reporting that when spaces were dedicated, youth felt more ownership of them:

The feel of the environment is their own. These are their tables, specifically theirs, not the tables that everyone uses. They have a different sense of pride and ownership, so they're wiping them down every single time, and they're being more respectful to the space and each other. They're calling each other out when they're not doing the right thing with the equipment.

Teaching artists in all three Clubs readily agreed that dedicated space was integral to the quality of the program. As one artist explained: "I don't think the collaborative space works as efficiently if you have to break it down and put it back up every day. That diminishes the quality because things can get broken, things can get scratched up."

Artists in shared spaces found it difficult to maintain the care and cleanliness of materials and equipment. One artist described her experience with another dance



They have a different sense of pride and ownership, so they're wiping them down every single time, and they're being more respectful to the space and each other. They're calling each other out when they're not doing the right thing with the equipment.

TEACHING ARTIST

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group using her space: "So we've had some issues with [other groups using the space] because you're not supposed to have food and drink in there, and I don't allow dancers to have street shoes on the dance floor. So we've had a little bit of learning process trying to figure that out."

Multi-purpose spaces also came with safety concerns. One unit planned to use the visual art studio for overflow dinner seating until the artist pointed out the presence of unsafe chemicals: "They used to have the kids eat as overflow in the art room, and I told them we can never do that due to safety. If a kid gets any of these chemicals [in their mouth], they're going to get sick."

Finally, it was difficult for teaching artists to establish offices in multi-purpose spaces, as they were often being used for programming when teaching artists needed the space for planning and preparation. By the end of the pilot period, all of the YAI studios were dedicated to the YAI classes.¹⁹

Other programs had to be relocated to create dedicated space. This created tensions with other unit staff and youth. In units where space was at a premium, YAI spaces took the place of other programs. This had ramifications for staff and youth in those programs. One unit, for example, turned a recreation area for younger youth into a renovated dance studio. One non-YAI staff member said:

Where they put the dance studio was a multi-purpose room for my age group. The gym is closed down right now for three days for 9-12 year olds because we have sports leagues going on, so [my group] doesn't get any gym time on those days. [The new dance studio] was an area where [the kids] were able to go downstairs, play dodgeball, run around—and now obviously that's nonexistent.

In other cases, teen rooms were repurposed for the tween YAI classes. One non-YAI staff member said, "There's a lot of jealousy because the tweens took over space that was always occupied by the teens."

Given the ramifications for other programs, Unit Directors had to carefully negotiate how spaces were allocated and used within the unit to avoid alienating other youth and staff.

Artists had to adapt to the fact that spaces were generally not studio quality. While the art spaces had a professional look, and teaching artists found them adequate for programming, most reported that they were not studio quality. One particular challenge was ambient noise from the unit, such as PA system announcements and hallway noises, which interrupted filming and digital recording activities. One film artist explained: "It's a kids' building. It's a reality: we're going to hear kids. It's a reality, it's nothing bad. It just is. But if you want to integrate certain art forms, and audio is a component of it, then you're going to be challenged."

¹⁹ One unit had two teaching artists sharing the same space for their YAI classes.

A black and white photograph of a young woman with short, dark hair. She is wearing a light-colored zip-up hoodie over a graphic t-shirt with large, bold letters. She is smiling and looking slightly to her right. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Artists also reported insufficient storage and ventilation. One visual artist said:

"These ceilings should be way higher than what they are for ventilation purposes. If we use spray paint in here, I have an air recycler, but for the amount that we do, we need to be outside. I have changed a lot of the health policies here."

One visual artist at a particularly space-challenged unit lacked a sink in his room, forcing youth to rinse brushes in the unit bathroom whenever they changed paint colors.

4. HOW TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADAPTATIONS

Leadership must:

- Identify and maintain dedicated space. This is an essential tenet of YAI, and leadership at all levels should plan to establish a dedicated space for each art form. Unit Directors must be involved in these discussions and should consider how to strategically repurpose building space.
- Clearly explain the importance of dedicated space. YSO leaders should explain to staff that teaching artists need dedicated space to store unfinished projects, reduce prep and clean-up time, safeguard equipment, and address safety concerns. As with all Principles, it is important for YSO leaders to emphasize the potential benefits for youth in order to ensure staff buy-in.
- Minimize the impact of relocation on displaced staff and programs. YSO leaders must ensure the needs of relocated programs are met in their newly assigned spaces.

Teaching artists must:

- Adapt to less-than optimal space and consider emotional safety concerns. Artists should develop work-around strategies for limitations such as ambient noise. They should also address privacy concerns, using curtains or other strategies, in order to ensure participants' emotional safety and maximize youth ownership of the space.

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF QUALITY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES



THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT FOUR PRINCIPLES THAT ARE ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF QUALITY AND FUNCTION TO ENSURE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT. THESE INCLUDE:

- Principle 6: Positive Adult-Youth and Peer Relationships
- Principle 7: Youth Input
- Principle 8: Hands-On Skill Building
- Principle 10: Physical and Emotional Safety

Table 14 provides an overview of the Principles designed to ensure youth engagement.

While teaching artists and dedicated space also influenced youth engagement, it was not their primary function. In comparison, these four Principles' primary function was engaging and retaining youth in YAI. Conversely, participants left YAI when they perceived that one or more of these Principles was not in place.²⁰ The engagement Principles are traditional youth development practices; as such, they were well aligned with the Clubs' culture and practices. However, data also shows that the YAI experience led some Clubs to expand their use of these practices.

Most of the engagement Principles were implemented when programming began. However, the purchase of equipment happened in the pre-programming phase. Also, Clubs sought youth input in the pre-program phase.

This chapter describes the ways in which Cross-Cutting Lessons 2 and

2a applied to these Principles and the expansion of practices necessary for successful implementation of each of these four Essential Building Blocks. Each of the Principle sub-sections discusses:

- What the Principle looked like in a YSO;
- The function of the Principle in a YSO;
- Expansion of the YSO's existing practices; and
- How to expand YSO existing practices to implement the principle.

Additionally, each Principle sub-section outlines promising implementation or alignment strategies. In some cases, implementation varied by art form; when it did, the findings can be found in pull-out boxes.

The Principles are presented in numerical order.

²⁰ While engagement was the primary function of these Principles, they were not the only drivers of youth recruitment and retention. Principle 1--specifically the 'wow' factor of the teaching artist--was also essential, but as the functions of the teaching artist extend beyond engagement, we categorized that Principle as transformative.

TABLE 12

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF QUALITY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE IN THE CLUB	FUNCTION	EXPANSIONS
PRINCIPLE N° 6 POSITIVE ADULT-YOUTH AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS	Strong, strategically-supported relationships between adults and youth developed within and outside of the program. Safe, collaborative peer relationships in YAI classes.	Engaging and retaining youth in the program through creating a sense of belonging.	Clubs supported positive relationship development in YAI. However, YAI youth at times reported more positive relationships with YAI staff than other Club staff.
PRINCIPLE N° 7 YOUTH INPUT	Youth input solicited at all stages. Youth leadership opportunities emerged as the initiative matured.	Engaging and retaining youth in the program through aligning activities with youth interests and culture.	YAI expanded the Clubs' practice of soliciting tween input to include involvement in hiring and space design decisions.
PRINCIPLE N° 8 HANDS-ON SKILL BUILDING	Regular hands-on learning with current high-quality equipment; equipment was purchased with teaching artist input and was appropriate to student skill levels.	Engaging and retaining youth in the program through active learning.	YAI expanded Clubs' use of current equipment and technology in the resource-constrained context of the Club.
PRINCIPLE N° 10 PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY	Artists needed strong youth development skills to create emotional safety in YAI classes. Youth safely used tools and attempted challenging dance routines with adequate preparation and support.	Engaging and retaining youth in the program, particularly those that did not feel like they 'fit' in other Club spaces.	YAI caused Clubs to re-examine and enhance emotional safety Club-wide.

PRINCIPLE N° 6

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

PRINCIPLE 6

Positive relationships with adult mentors and peers foster a sense of belonging and acceptance.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Strong, strategically-supported relationships between adults and youth within and outside of the program. Safe, collaborative peer relationships in YAI classes.

FUNCTION: Engaging and retaining youth in the program through creating a sense of belonging.

EXPANSION OF PRACTICES: YAI youth at times reported more positive relationships with YAI staff than other Club staff.

Overview: Positive adult-youth and peer relationships were aligned with the Club culture and were a consistent strength of YAI. Principle 6 was a critical component of youth engagement in YAI and the Principle most closely aligned with YSO culture. Teaching artists used formal and informal strategies to develop relationships with participants, both inside and outside of class. YAI participants formed relationships with their peers through collaborative activities, rituals, and routines designed to foster a sense of belonging. While most of the teaching artists were skilled at fostering youth relationships, and Clubs hired with this skill set in mind, they still received valuable guidance from their liaisons, Unit Directors, and other unit staff. At the same time, some youth reported more positive relationships with artists than with other unit staff. Building positive peer relationships among participants was more challenging for artists, particularly as a core group of skilled participants developed a sense of ownership over the program. Nonetheless, youth reported generally positive peer interactions in YAI.

As Principle 6 has two distinct components—adult-youth relationships and peer relationships—this section describes each component separately.

1. POSITIVE ADULT-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Positive adult-youth relationships were a consistent strength of YAI as teaching artists prioritized relationship-building in YAI classes and other Club spaces. However, relationship-building required time outside of the YAI class, which challenged part-time artists given their limited hours. Each of these key characteristics are described below.

Best-practice youth-development arts organizations we investigated recognize the crucial role that rituals, group collaboration, and one-to-one connections play in fostering strong relationships among youth and between artist mentors and young people—and thus, in encouraging a feeling of connection.

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Positive adult-youth relationships were present in YAI across Clubs and throughout the implementation period. Teaching artists were officially known as “artist mentors,” a title that emphasized their role as relationship-builders. Leadership and parents observed that teaching artists had strong, positive relationships with the students in their classes, many of whom referred to their teachers as “more of a friend than staff,” like a “mom,” someone they could “actually speak to,” and who could “do no wrong.” Such sentiments were particularly strong for teaching artists who had been at the Club longer and were expressed by youth who had participated in multiple YAI sessions.

Teaching artists prioritized adult-youth relationship-building both inside and outside of the classroom and through formal and informal strategies. Across all Clubs and over the course of the initiative, artists emphasized the need to establish strong adult-youth relationships in their classes before other aspects of programming, especially high expectations, could be fully implemented. For example, in the first year of the initiative, one teaching artist stated, “Our first goal is to build a rapport and relationship with the kids. Art can be very therapeutic as a release, so I make sure that I find out what each child needs and serve that individual child.”

Another, who purposefully set aside time prior to the start of the skill-development class to get to know youth in the unit, said “The first two weeks were critical.”

According to teaching artists, it was important to set aside structured and unstructured class time to “tune into” youth. This included circulating around the unit in a more informal way. One artist said,

I think it's really important to devote a decent amount of time to being in the Club... You get a deeper relationship with the kids. I did that when I first started here. That's really vital—being able to just play with them and not just have to program in your space all the time.

Relationship-building required time in the unit outside of the skill-development class, which made it challenging for part-time teaching artists. Limited hours made it difficult for part-time teaching artists with many classroom and unit responsibilities to spend additional time with youth. One artist said, “Being a mentor, you want to be available for the kids and really help them out. So, it's kind of a harsh thing for them to realize that I can't really make [their events]. The hours don't mesh so well.”



One liaison also expressed concern about the part-time artist model as it related to relationship-building:

When you have full-time artists, they have more time to spend with the kids, because they're just there. They're there every day and the kids can tell that they can count on them—whether or not they have class. They just know that they're going to be there. I think they can develop deeper relationships with the kids. They have more opportunities to touch them more in the art form, whereas the part-time artists don't have that. I can't tell you how many times I've been in a classroom with a part-time artist and the kids are like, 'Okay—see you tomorrow,' and they're like, 'Actually, you won't see me for another three days.' I think it's disappointing for them—they want them to be there every day.

2. POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

The second component of Principle 6 involves "positive relationships with peers [that] foster a sense of belonging and acceptance." Teaching artists fostered positive peer relationships by providing opportunities for youth with similar interests to collaborate and develop friendships. At the same time, positive peer relationships proved to be more challenging to develop than positive adult-youth relationships. The characteristics of positive peer relationships in YAI will be described below.



Positive peer relationships in YAI centered on collaboration, peer support, and inclusion. Positive peer relationships developed when participants were inclusive and welcoming, when they collaborated successfully on group projects, and when they supported each other as they learned new skills. Youth, parents, and teaching artists reported numerous examples of friendships that developed in the program. One parent reported: “[My son] really, really likes the class. It’s hard for him to make friends, and he made friends in here.”

A teaching artist described a friendship that developed in his program: “Perfect example of what I want from the program: two totally different kids came together to work on this one thing with a passion.”

By spring 2016, 90% of participants in YAI agreed that they got along with each other in class, and 75% befriended someone new because of YAI.

Positive peer relationships were more difficult to develop than positive adult-youth relationships and required teaching artists to have strong youth-development skills. The quality of peer friendships within YAI sometimes depended on pre-existing relationships formed at school, at home, or at the unit during non-YAI activities. Inherent tensions also existed in the program between established participants, who developed a sense of ownership over the program, and newcomers. As programs developed, a core group of long-time YAI participants sometimes created difficulties for new youth, competing for limited work stations, opportunities to participate in select program activities, and high-quality supplies. One teaching artist saw “veteran kids blocking other kids from coming in.”

This tension was partly related to students’ skill-level disparities. Advanced participants became impatient with new students who needed instructions repeated and worked at a slow pace. In performance-based classes such as dance, established participants could be critical of newcomers. One teaching artist said, “Sometimes the kids blame each other [for performance mistakes].” Youth could also be competitive about getting solos or other accolades for their work.

Teaching artists needed strong youth development skills, including the ability to manage skill-level disparities without creating competition and the ability to manage tween conflict. The expectation was not that these challenges would never arise, but that teaching artists would be able to manage them productively. Liaisons and Unit Directors occasionally stepped in to help manage these tensions. In addition, Clubs and teaching artists ultimately recognized the need to create separate classes for beginners and advanced youth.

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3. ENGAGING YOUTH

Principle 6 was critical for attracting and retaining youth, who were drawn to YAI by the artists’ ability to connect with them. Youth also followed friends to YAI, but dropped out, at times, as a result of negative peer interactions.

Adult-youth relationships were important to youth recruitment and retention.

Artists explained that the Club relationships they built outside of YAI attracted youth to the program. Further, these relationships taught them about youth needs and interests and helped them retain participants by addressing challenges in the program. One artist explained:

You’ve just got to be somebody they want to be around... you have to be a fun person that they feel cares. You’ve got to be good at what you do, at least in their perspective...the [artist] has to draw, paint, color, and present the way they perceive a professional to do it...so you just be yourself and be good at what you do.

Another artist said: “I think I’ve learned with retention, it’s [about] that relationship [and about] knowing that each kid needs something different... It’s listening to what they want and kind of going with the flow... [and] being able to meet them where they’re at.”

The importance of relationships to retention created challenges when teaching artists turned over. To facilitate retention, unit staff had to handle the transition carefully and engage youth in the hiring process. However, we heard that some youth left the YAI program after their favorite teaching artist left.

Peer relationships were also important for youth recruitment and retention. Youth and teaching artists reported that some youth followed friends into YAI classes, but negative peer dynamics sometimes caused them to leave. For example, one youth no longer participating in YAI said there were “some annoying kids that kept bossing other people around.” Another former participant said, “We couldn’t even work because people kept messing around.” It was critical for teaching artists, then, to attend to these dynamics.

Table 13 displays promising and innovative strategies teaching artists used to build positive relationships in YAI.

TABLE 13

PRINCIPLE 6 (POSITIVE ADULT-YOUTH AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
CREATING AND MAINTAINING POSITIVE ADULT-YOUTH AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start each class with an opening circle where youth share about their day or participate in other icebreaker activities. Invite socially isolated youth to participate in YAI, especially at the recommendation of staff or youth already in the class, and make accommodations for their comfort.
CREATING AND MAINTAINING POSITIVE ADULT-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be present in common unit spaces in order to establish familiarity with the students and gain a better sense of what they need
CREATING AND MAINTAINING POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct collaborative groups and partnerships based on skill level and maturity. Create a brag board to acknowledge youth accomplishments. Invite youth to write positive comments about their peers on a whiteboard throughout the class period. Develop separate classes for advanced and beginner youth to alleviate tensions caused by different skill levels within the class.

4. EXPANSION OF PRINCIPLE 6 IN A YSO

Principle 6 did not require any adaptation to the Club, nor did Club practices require adaption to the Principle: positive adult-youth and peer relationships were already key elements of Clubs' programming. Nonetheless, there were some notable lessons from the alignment between Principle 6 and Club practices, including:

- Teaching artists benefited from the support of Club staff;
- Teaching artists provided some students with more positive relationships than they had experienced at the Club in the past.

These lessons are discussed below.

YAI's teaching artists benefited from the support of Club staff. Unit Directors, liaisons, and other Club staff supported the development of adult-youth and peer relationships. Unit Directors and other unit staff introduced artists to families and provided important

background information. In some cases, artists consulted liaisons and Unit Directors regarding difficult relationships with youth or challenging classroom dynamics. One liaison said, "I ask [the teaching artist] what is going on. And if there is a rough class we will talk about it." Similarly, a teaching artist reported developing relationships with unit staff: "[One staff member] works with tweens, and I have a good relationship with him. [I talk to him] if I have any problems with [participant] behavior."

YAI's teaching artists provided some students with more positive relationships than they had experienced at the Club in the past. Many participants developed strong relationships with their teaching artists and described these relationships more as more positive than those with other Club staff. Early in the initiative, some participants felt that teaching artists were different from other Club staff. Some youth described teaching artists as better listeners who responded more fairly to youth in their classes. One youth compared

teaching artists to other Club staff by saying, “[The teaching artist] is way different—other staff yell at you, and she listens to what you have to say.” Another youth described her teaching artist similarly:

There is something about him that is different and sticks out. He doesn't really get upset. He gets mad and is straightforward, but [he] isn't the type to scream at us. [The teaching artist] is firm but...isn't mean. He knows what he wants and is very confident...I feel like I owe him some amount of respect. I think [the teaching artist] commands respect and other kids feel that way.

Club staff reported that when they referred youth with behavioral or social challenges to YAI, the youth often made a connection with the teaching artist and thrived in the program. According to one artist, her relationships and experiences with YAI youth were qualitatively different from those of other staff:

It's the kids that, when I started here, were the ones always getting in trouble, were [not engaged in the activities] and needed something to do. You know, [once they were in class] they were able to turn around those behaviors. They found something that they really enjoy.

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It is important to note that our data do not allow us to conclude that YAI artists were generally more capable of forming strong relationships with tweens than other Club staff. Their positive experiences may be due to the intersection of their interests and the interests of the teaching artists, or to a unique personality fit. We do not know, for example, if youth who participated heavily in Club sports programs felt similarly attached and positive about their relationship with the staff who ran those activities. Nonetheless, for some YAI participants, their relationship with the teaching artist was better than with other Club staff. This allowed them to thrive in the Club.

5. HOW TO EXPAND POSITIVE ADULT AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS IN A YSO

Leadership must:

- **Capitalize on in-house youth development expertise to support the teaching artists.** In particular, YSO staff can introduce teaching artists to youth and their families and share relevant information. YSO staff can also be resources for teaching artists who encounter challenging peer relationships.

Teaching artists must:

- **Recognize in-house expertise and make efforts to reach out to YSO staff for support.** Teaching artists can also observe other programs within the Club for peer relationship management ideas.
- **Leverage their positive relationships with youth to support engagement and relationship-building in the rest of the YSO.** In some instances, teaching artists had stronger relationships with youth than other Club staff. In these instances, Club staff looked to artists for insight as they interacted with youth in other Club activities. Teaching artists should utilize their strong relationships with participants to facilitate positive interactions with other YSO staff.



PRINCIPLE N° 7
YOUTH INPUT

PRINCIPLE 7

Youth participants actively shape programs and assume meaningful leadership roles.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Adult-guided youth input is solicited at all stages, but requires strong youth development skills; youth leadership opportunities emerge later.

FUNCTION: Engaging and retaining youth through aligning programming with their interests.

EXPANSION OF PRACTICES: Club practice of soliciting tween input was expanded through YAI.

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Overview: Youth voices challenged teaching artists and expanded the Club's thinking about youth input. Principle 7 (Youth Input) contributed to YAI enrollment and retention. All Clubs solicited youth input in hiring, space design, and selection of YAI art forms. As the initiative progressed, programs were "tween-informed"—that is, youth input was sought in daily programming through formal and informal strategies. However, teaching artists experienced a learning curve in incorporating youth voice successfully. Youth input and youth leadership were well aligned with existing youth development principles, but Clubs reported that YAI expanded their strategies for seeking youth input.

1. YOUTH INPUT IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

All Clubs involved youth in YAI start-up activities, and teaching artists incorporated youth input in the classroom. However, teaching artists experienced a learning curve as youth expressed a desire for more input. Youth leadership roles were slower to emerge in the program. Clubs also learned that an understanding of youth culture was an important aspect of Principle 7.

All Clubs solicited youth input regarding art forms, staff hiring, and classroom space. All Clubs allowed youth to help select the art form and participate in the teaching artist hiring process. One staff member emphasized the youth's role in program selection and how it generated enthusiasm: "We had a focus group with seven kids and [a staff member]. The kids were really excited about it, and they gave a lot of input. I think it's going to be a successful program because the kids want to do it, and they're interested in doing it."

Staff also solicited youth feedback about YAI program spaces, though Clubs noted that the majority of youth input was related to the colors used in the space.

Youth input was not without its challenges. While all three Clubs included youth voices during start-up, leaders in two Clubs noted that generalizing student voice was challenging, particularly when participants disagreed with one another or were not representative of the entire Club membership. One youth who participated in the art form selection said, "Some people said [they wanted] activities where we build stuff, but there were too many girls [in the focus group], and they chose dance."

Since many participants lacked arts experience, some Clubs found that a lack of background knowledge led youth to select art forms they did not completely understand. Some youth who requested digital music, for example, were more interested in singing and songwriting than beat-making or audio engineering.

Finally, youth sometimes identified art forms for which their community did not have a strong set of existing resources. This made it more challenging for Clubs to recruit instructors and identify community partners. In the future, Clubs recommended that YAI staff combine youth interests with information about the community in order to determine the most viable programming.

ART FORM DIFFERENCE

DANCE

Dance artists reported the greatest challenge incorporating youth voice and leadership, and youth consistently reported fewer leadership opportunities in dance compared to other art forms. On the staff survey, dance teachers rated themselves one half grade lower on youth input than teaching artists in the other art forms. Since teaching artists typically choreographed the routines and

organized classes to prepare for performances, there may be fewer natural opportunities for youth input and leadership in dance. However, some opportunities did exist, such as letting youth pick music and lead exercises during warm-ups. Youth also worked with each other informally to improve dance moves.

[Best-practice arts organizations] regularly seek out young people's ideas, recommendations and opinions on project themes, program format and sometimes even the selection of artist mentors...

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Programs were "informed by tweens" rather than led by them. All teaching artists provided multiple opportunities for participants to provide feedback on long- and short-term decisions. Long-term decisions included determining the YAI class name, developing classroom rules, and giving opinions about upcoming projects, while short-term decisions concerned the mechanics of individual classes, such as the order of activities within a single period. Teaching artists used formal strategies, such as voting, and informal strategies, such as one-on-one conversations, to solicit input. One youth explained a formal strategy for input in a film class: "We have a vote: we work together. No right or wrong answer—it's okay either way. That's how we get stuff done. When we are like, no, then we have to take time to listen to each other."

Artists learned to maintain high expectations by using youth input to guide programming without letting participants lead the programs themselves. One artist said:

If it was all youth input, we would be doing things for three-minute periods and moving on. But I do take what they say as [their] interests [and topics] to go deeper in for another exercise or for the final product. I really try to pick out what they say as [their] interests versus what we should be doing right away.

One youth provided this example of adult-guided youth input: "He lets us go on our own schedules, sort of, but we do have deadlines for things. But we get to do it at our pace."

A dance artist described the need for background skills and knowledge before participants could make certain decisions. The artist said:

They pick the colors, costumes, and all of that. I have to look over some of the things they do because their imagination is so high, and you want to keep it there, but you have to shape it a little bit as well. They have

more freedom in their composition, but when it comes to class and technique, they don't have that much say-so. But I make sure it's both. They won't have the tools to come up with their own [composition] if they don't learn the [components] first.

Teaching artists experienced a learning curve incorporating youth input

into classroom-level decisions. Although teaching artists cited the importance of youth input, most did not establish formal strategies until after their first session. At the start, staff described chatting with youth and being receptive to the feedback they offered rather than proactively including all participants. Staff at one Club in particular cited youth input as a challenge. One artist said:

I am very used to telling the kids what they are learning and doing, but here it is very different. I have to start figuring out what they are saying they want to learn. I just need to be able to figure out what they want to do.

Early in the initiative, participants said they wanted more independent work time and more opportunities to give input. Artists also said they wanted to incorporate youth voice into their classrooms but were waiting "until [the youth] get a little bit more of their skills and exploring in." As the initiative matured, teaching artists found more ways to both solicit and incorporate youth input into their programs.

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Even though teaching artists were focused on developing new strategies, they did not feel incorporation of youth voice was one of their strengths. At the end of the study period, teaching artists gave themselves middling ratings²¹ in providing opportunities for youth input and youth leadership during YAI classes, suggesting that they offered those opportunities but could improve in the future. The teaching artists' average self-rating for providing opportunities for youth input was a 3.4 on a 5-point scale. However, this was slightly higher than the average self-rating for offering youth leadership opportunities, which was a 3.1 on a 5 point scale.

Youth leadership opportunities emerged slowly and involved advanced youth mentoring beginners. Every teaching artist but one waited at least one session to offer youth leadership opportunities. One artist attributed this to needing a core group: "I let them choose to a certain degree. [...] We're really not to that point yet where they can autonomously make decisions. [...] Until you really get your core group, it's hard." However, as the initiative matured, teaching artists developed more youth leadership opportunities. By the third year of the initiative, at least one artist in every Club intentionally offered youth leadership roles. One Club staff member described a teaching artist as having "truly mastered" the youth leadership component of the program because the artist "allows a young person to teach a lesson on something that [the teaching artist] really feels they've done a great job on so that they can show another kid or buddy up."

²¹ Teaching artists completed a survey in spring 2016 in which they rated themselves on a variety of practices related to the Ten Principles. For items related to Principle 7, teaching artists were asked to grade themselves on a 5-point scale (A-F, akin to a traditional grading scale, with 'A' being a strength and 'F' being a challenge). Translating the grading scale to numbers, 10=F, 2.0=D, 3.0=C, and so on. Thus, a 3.4, for example, represents a C-C+ grade.

Attention to youth culture was an important part of Principle 7 (Youth input). *Something to Say* describes the connection between YAI programs and youth culture as a key component of this principle. Across Clubs, artists' ability to make these connections contributed to youth engagement and, in some cases, increased the support provided by parents and other Club staff. One digital music artist described how his familiarity with popular culture served as an entry point to engaging youth in programming:

It was weird at first, when I came in here, because they watch some of the videos I've seen too. They're surprised when I know some of the songs. They find a respect for me because of that, or [because I know about] internet memes or whatever the funny thing is. Just that I know about it, I think they like that.

On the other hand, two artists were not seen as a "good fit" for the program partly because they were perceived to lack cultural competence. Staff felt that those artists "didn't get the input of the kids," which led to "missed opportunities." One Club staff member said:

[The artist] was amped. He's so excited about what he learned with the professionals, his peers [at a conference], and he wanted to bring that back to the Club. So [the liaison] was working it through with him: 'That's exciting for you, but just because it's exciting for you doesn't mean it's exciting for the kids.' There's a connection gap—it holds no relevance to their lives and their process.

To address some of the cultural competence and fit issues, several artists across Clubs attended a workshop on African-American youth culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison called "Hip Hop in the Heartland."



In addition, it was important for artists to be sensitive to family culture and values. For example, one visual artist revised the requirements of his art projects when he became aware of the Somali Muslim prohibition on the artistic depiction of living things.

2. ENGAGING YOUTH

Participants and teaching artists reported that Principle 7 (Youth input) engaged youth and retained them in the program. Youth input kept YAI programming aligned with participants' interests and gave them a sense of ownership in the program.

Youth input was key to participants' sense of ownership, engagement, and retention in the program. One staff member said:

I know if those kids have a voice in what the space looks like, they're going to take ownership of the space, and when programming is happening in that space, no matter what it is, they're going to be invested, and so they're going to participate.

One artist said that activities "don't seem to stick when we don't use [participants'] ideas, but when we do, it really makes a difference," while another artist intentionally crafted his curriculum around youth voice "because we'll employ some of their interests into a project so that everyone's buying in as a group. And now they feel that, they have more ownership in it."

TABLE 14

PRINCIPLE 7 (YOUTH INPUT) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

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GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
OBTAINING YOUTH INPUT	Other Senior Leaders and Liaisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Allow youth to contribute to the hiring process.Require final candidates for teaching artist positions to teach a demo lesson, then ask for participants' opinions and feedback after the class.
OBTAINING YOUTH INPUT	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Let students vote on daily tasks.Hold regular, informal check-ins with youth to discuss their ideas and interests.Hold formal focus groups.
PROVIDING LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitate mentorship opportunities with younger youth. In one Club, for example, current participants mentored BGC youth who were too young to participate in YAI. In another Club, youth who had aged out of YAI were able to return as junior staff and mentor current participants. One teaching artist noted that the mentorship between experienced and novice youth also occurred organically: "Wherever we need [a new student] to catch up—I'll see some of my veterans come up [to the new student] and say, 'No, no. Here's how you [use the equipment]. They get to teach and learn twice, so the saying goes. I try to engage my veterans to teach."

Youth agreed that having a voice in programs aligned with their interests was a key factor in their decision to participate and stay involved. One youth said: "I like that [the teaching artist] wants us to put our voice out there. He takes our suggestions and he thinks about them."

Some youth reported leaving the program when it didn't reflect their interests and input. Across Clubs, some former YAI participants said they stopped participating because the class had become "boring"—activities were being repeated or were not aligned with their interests.

Table 14 illustrates promising and innovative strategies teaching artists and Club leaders used to implement youth input and youth leadership in YAI's design and classes.

3. EXPANSION OF PRINCIPLE 7 IN THE YSO

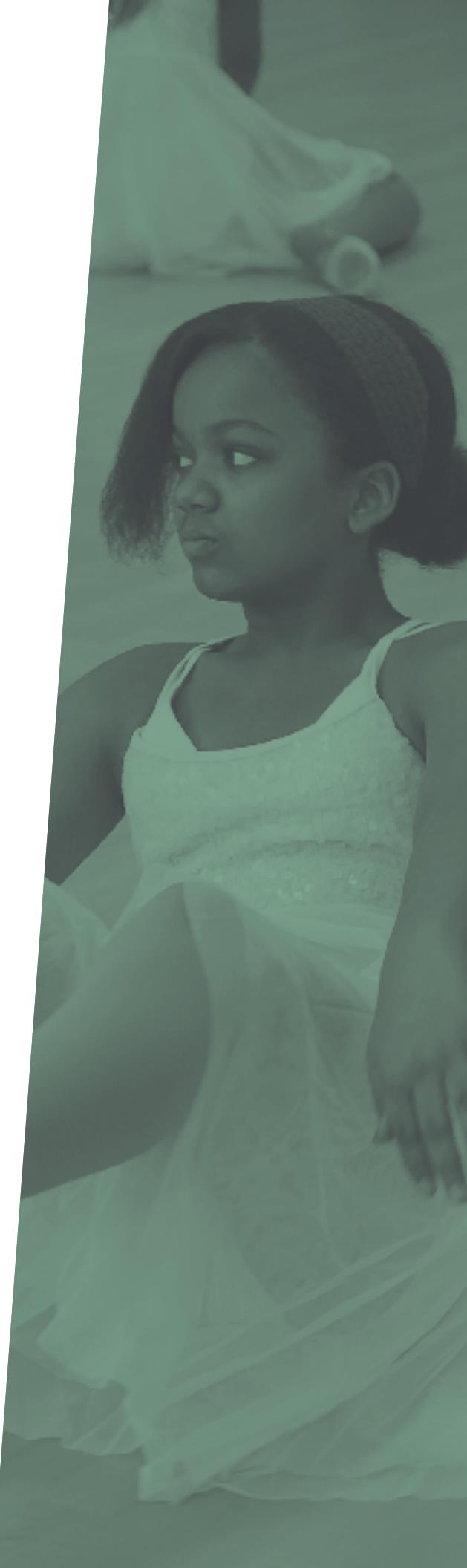
Youth input was implemented more robustly in YAI than in other Club tween programming; as a result, Club leaders reported plans to expand youth input beyond YAI. Clubs already offered teen leadership opportunities and provided some opportunities for teen input, but they had not made the same robust efforts with tweens. YAI also provided all three Clubs with new strategies to integrate youth voice at the organizational level, and Club staff expanded this practice as a result. Leaders at two Clubs were particularly enthusiastic about further incorporating youth voice in the hiring process. One liaison said:

Getting the kids involved was a real success of this particular project and taught us a lot. We had to do it throughout the entire process, from 'what art form do you want to do?' to 'who are we going to hire?' [and] 'what is the space going to look like?' We got used to going to the kids to get information and saw the importance of it along the way. That is just now ingrained into a lot of what we want to do and into other changes that we make in the Club.

Leadership in one Club felt that youth voice was important for program feedback and curriculum formation. At another Club, leadership felt that the inclusion of youth voice in YAI had "left its fingerprint"; they intended to start incorporating youth voice more deliberately by systematically and consistently conducting surveys and focus groups outside of YAI.

Two Unit Directors also discussed further integrating youth voice at the unit level. One Director said, "We actually started basing a lot of our stuff off of YAI now. Kids give input and things get done." The second Unit Director noted a shift towards more formal practices, mirroring YAI youth input structures:

They get a lot of feedback from the tweens, so that's been something we've been trying to do too. [We do it] more informally now, but we're moving to more formal surveys and thinking about doing some focus groups with all three age groups: K-3, 4-6, and 7-12.





4. HOW TO EXPAND YSO PRACTICES REGARDING YOUTH INPUT AND LEADERSHIP

Leadership must:

- **Involve youth in hiring, space design, and art form selection.**
This contributed to youth engagement.
- **Provide boundaries as youth's knowledge of the arts may be limited.**
In selecting art forms, leadership should consider youth interests but also the degree to which they understand the art form. Clubs may want to conduct sample classes to ensure participants have enough information about the art forms in which they express interest. They should also consider the availability of teaching artists and community partners before making a decision.
- **Develop flexible processes to allow teaching artists to respond to youth interests.** One film artist wanted to be able to take his film crew out on short notice, to film on location in response to youth interests and ideas. The liaison developed a universal permission slip for this purpose. In addition, the Unit Director kept a van "on hold" for the artist in the event he needed to leave the Club.

Teaching artists must:

- **Develop strategies that are tactical and have clear boundaries.** Artists developed multiple strategies to offer youth input in both more immediate and long-term decision-making. At the same time, they continued to provide some boundaries such as deadlines or a limited range of content selections. Some artists also developed the ability to be spontaneous and "go with the flow" in response to youth interests.
- **Be conscious of and learn about youth culture.** In order to be responsive to youth interests, artists must make every effort to learn about youth culture, including music and media, and be open to integrating youth culture into programming. Teaching artists must also be sensitive to family culture and values which may have implications for the artwork youth produce.

**PRINCIPLE 8**

Programs focus on hands-on skill building using current equipment and technology.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Regular hands-on learning with current equipment; equipment purchased with teaching artist input and appropriate to student skill level.

FUNCTION: Engaging and retaining youth through hands-on active learning and current equipment and technology.

EXPANSION OF PRACTICES: YAI expanded Clubs' use of current equipment and technology in the resource-constrained context of the Club where programs typically did not have access to similar equipment and technology.

Overview: Hands-on skill building and current equipment kept youth engaged in YAI in spite of the Club's voluntary participation culture.

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Principle 8 was important to youth engagement and retention in light of the voluntary drop-in culture of the Club and the multitude of other youth programming options. Although hands-on activities were already a common component of YSO's arts programming, those programs did not always operate with current equipment. As a result, youth in classes heavily reliant on technology faced a steep learning curve; to address this, artists endeavored to make those classes as hands-on, discovery-oriented, and safe as possible until students were ready for more conceptual learning. The availability of new technology and equipment was unique in the resource-constrained Club environment, where other programs typically did not have access to such equipment. This created tensions outside of YAI.

1. HANDS-ON SKILL BUILDING USING CURRENT EQUIPMENT IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Principle 8 included hands-on project-based activities which were implemented with high-quality equipment. The equipment was purchased, in most cases, with input from the teaching artist. Teaching artists wanted professional-level equipment, but they were also conscious of the need to appropriately level equipment for the skills of the age group.

Hands-on, experiential learning was the primary mode of instruction. All teaching artists reported using hands-on activities for more than half of each class. Hands-on learning meant that students were using high-quality equipment to learn how to create beats, edit videos, sew clothing, choreograph dance movements, and paint murals, among other activities.

An essential element for successfully engaging youth in OST arts programs is providing them skills through meaningful, hands-on projects... Young people are interested in experimenting with materials and technology themselves, instead of hearing or reading about the experiences of others. In the process, youth want to gain skills. ...Often, that requires incorporating high-quality current technology when feasible.

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However, teaching artists were simultaneously instructing youth and letting them engage with equipment. A majority of teaching artists reported that youth spent at least half of class time listening to instruction. One artist explained:

They need hands-on [activities] almost immediately. That makes sense, because when I make a video story, [it's] 'don't tell me--show me!' As soon as I put a camera in their hands, they started asking, 'how do I do this? Why does this work?' They were more open to learning because they were asking and I wasn't just telling them.

Project-based learning allowed for individualized work, which provided opportunities and challenges for the teaching artist. Projects in most art forms, particularly visual and technical arts, were individualized but united by a common theme. Artists reported that this could be challenging to support in the classroom and required consistent rotation from one youth to the next. One artist said:

I mean, it is a very hands-on art form. All of it that we're doing is hands on. The only challenge that I really see happening is the kids really strive for one-on-one time.

So let me show you how it applies to the software and the sounds and stuff that you have on your computer in front of you. Let me show you how to do that. Another kid in the same exact class may want to learn something different. Okay, here. Let me show you how to do that. It's individual-based. So I'm still bouncing.

Some teaching artists experimented with supporting small groups of youth with self-initiated projects outside of class time. For example, one digital music teacher provided extra support to a group of tweens who had ideas for music projects but were reluctant to attend regular classes. However, artists had limited free time for these projects.

YAI used current, high-quality equipment, including computers, touch screen monitors, audio systems, dance mirrors, a Marley dance

floor, video and music editing software, a 3D printer, teleprompter, news desk, light boxes, sewing machines, photography and video cameras, easels, and projectors. All stakeholders, including students, parents, teaching artists and Club leadership, found these materials valuable.

One parent said:

I would say [YAI is] different in the way that it has better technology. You know, the computers, everything that they have that's available to the students here is different. We never had anything like this, that I can remember, since I've been here—so I think it's a wonderful program.

The parent of a child in a different Club agreed: "...since my son has been very young he is just drawn to technology and computers, so having this opportunity, to me, gives him the edge."

Equipment was purchased with expert input, ideally from the teaching artist. In the start-up phase, some Clubs purchased equipment before the teaching artists were hired. Two Clubs consulted with local experts, including college faculty, about installing software and equipment. When teaching artists were hired, however, they often had different opinions about which equipment would best align with their curriculum and experience. As with the YAI spaces, each teaching artist had specific needs and preferences, and new teaching artists who came in and used equipment selected by the previous teaching artist

commented on their own learning curve. As new artists were hired, Clubs gave them the opportunity to select the equipment and supplies they wanted for their program.

Equipment was appropriate to participant skill levels. Artists had different opinions about the appropriate and necessary level of quality. The majority of participants were beginners; therefore, ensuring hands-on engagement precluded selecting the most sophisticated, professional-level equipment. One film teacher chose to use "prosumer" quality video cameras because they were high quality but also easy to use. Another teaching artist said:

I use iMovie [a video editing software] because Final Cut [another video editing software] would just be too much. I'm going to do Final Cut once they start really getting the editing process down—but that's a lot of information. The cool thing about iMovie's interface is it allows an 11- to 12-year-old to just go in and get it.

Safety was also a key consideration. The fashion teacher chose youth-appropriate sewing machines that were safer to handle, with slower speed settings, than professional machines. Artists that chose more advanced software and equipment often encountered challenges keeping youth engaged as they struggled to learn how to use it.



2. ENGAGING YOUTH

Hands-on and project-based activities, as well as new and sufficient equipment, were critical to youth engagement in the context of the Club's drop-in culture. Teaching artists emphasized the role of hands-on activities to keep students engaged and interested. One explained how he learned that he needed to maintain a fast, unpredictable pace so that youth stayed engaged:

So, like I told them yesterday, we were doing software the last couple weeks, I want to turn it back to [song-writing], practice that, and then get into the [recording] booth. We take left turns and keep them guessing. They don't know what's coming. And that's turned out to be much better than what I was doing before. It keeps kids more interested.

Former participants also reported that they stopped attending when there was not enough hands-on activity. One student described a class in which the teaching artist sometimes showed videos: "I stopped because it was getting kind of boring to me...the videos, mostly. The paintings and stuff were cool, but I didn't want to wait. I wanted to do the things already."

Club staff also observed that hands-on opportunities to use current technology were a significant draw to the program.

Table 15 describes innovative and promising strategies that teaching artists in YAI and Club leaders employed for using hands-on activities to bolster youth engagement and retention, skill building, and differentiated learning. Strategies for purchasing equipment are also included.

ART FORM DIFFERENCE

TECHNICAL AND VISUAL ARTS

Technological art forms were significantly different from other classes and required more one-on-one time due to a steeper learning curve. This also created the need for smaller class sizes. One teaching artist said:

My number one challenge [is] what to keep them busy and focused with while I'm working through the room. I tell them I wish I could duplicate and have like ten of me just for these couple hours a week--and they all agree. Right now, they're all doing different costumes. [I tell them,] if you want to do something cool like this, you have to wait it out, and you each have to take turns. I have some other things that they can do in the room, but they usually just want to keep working on their costume, which I understand.

In addition, Open Studio and other exposure classes were more challenging because youth couldn't dabble without learning about the equipment.

Tech-heavy and visual arts required a more significant investment in equipment and supplies than dance classes. Some Club staff and community partners raised concerns about the cost of maintaining equipment and keeping it current over time.

Visual art programs required a significant amount of supplies, many of which could not be purchased in advance as artists designed programming in response to participant interest. One Club leader described the difference in equipment and supplies by art form:

Resources for materials are critical for some of the art forms, not so critical for the others—like dance. Once we get the studio together, they don't need as many materials. But fashion design definitely requires a larger budget. The same goes for visual arts, but there are a lot of different ways that you can pull your resources together. We had to budget to purchase certain materials and we did. For digital music, there will be a budget necessary for maintaining the equipment, but that's not an everyday thing.

TABLE 15

PRINCIPLE 8 (HANDS-ON SKILL BUILDING) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
ESTABLISHING HANDS-ON LEARNING FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let students explore equipment. Implement projects outside of the classroom setting.
DIFFERENTIATING PROGRAM OFFERINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maximize youth engagement, provide flexibility and options for students in the ways they can engage with the equipment/materials. For example, some youth might learn best working in groups and figuring out the technology together, while others might prefer to work on their own. Allowing some flexibility can help foster both engagement and learning.
ESTABLISHING HANDS-ON LEARNING FOR SKILL BUILDING	Teaching Artist, Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When possible, such as in painting and drawing classes, provide materials for students to take home. This not only acts as material motivation and incentive to continue with the program, but also helps ensure that all youth have access to art materials outside of the classroom and can practice at home.
PURCHASING EQUIPMENT	Teaching Artist, Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with local schools and organizations to know what equipment the students might already have access to. At one site, staff would have installed Mac computers and software at the Club if they knew that students in the community had iPads from their schools.

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3. EXPANSION OF PRINCIPLE 8 IN THE YSO

Clubs did not encounter significant challenges implementing Principle 8, as hands-on activities were already common in the Club. However, the quality and amount of equipment purchased was out of the ordinary for the Club setting. In addition, the Club's technology infrastructure was not always sufficient for the demands of the tech-heavy art forms.

Two challenges in particular stood out:

- Clubs had to grow accustomed to purchasing high-end equipment, which was sometimes at odds with their resource-constrained context.
- YSOs may need to consider investing in their Information Technology (IT) infrastructure to support YAI programs.

Each is discussed in more detail.

Clubs had to grow accustomed to the notion of purchasing high-end equipment and supplies, which was sometimes at odds with their resource-constrained context. Hands-on experiential learning is a common YSO practice; however, because Clubs operate in a policy environment that does not afford them adequate resources, many Club programs do not have the opportunity to invest in equipment and supplies as current or ample as those for YAI. As stated earlier, the high-quality equipment was a source of pride for Club leaders. However, the almost professional-level equipment and technology did create some tensions for teaching artists with other Club staff. As one artist explained:

I think so much of the tension that I felt is that I come in [to the Club] and I have everything I want. I have a big computer, I have all this stuff, I have great new cameras, and the people around me are not experiencing that same level of attention to their programming or even to their material needs.

Tensions also arose as other staff requested to borrow or share the YAI equipment. Clubs were reluctant to allow this due to the specialized nature of the equipment, and the artist did not always have free time to support activities with other Club staff.

Club leaders, therefore, looked for ways to “share the wealth” of YAI with other Club arts programs. In one Club, staff purchased a dance floor for YAI’s public performances, but this portable dance floor could also be utilized by the Club’s pre-existing break dance group. Another Club held an arts supplies fair for the arts programs across all its units. The programs had previously received little attention and were chronically short on supplies. This organization-wide effort brought attention to all the Club’s arts programs and bolstered the supplies of these programs.

YSOs may need to consider investing in their IT to support YAI programs. The Club’s technology infrastructure impeded the use of current equipment and technology. In one Club, teachers in tech-heavy art forms learned, as they launched their programs, that the Club’s IT infrastructure was not sufficient to support the computers and other equipment they had purchased. The liaison explained:

We have had some issues with technology. We didn’t have a fast enough router, so the programs were loading and saving slow. The tech we got was great. However, we may look at upgrading those hard drives and those computers, because we need them a little bit faster.

In the other two Clubs, even artists in less tech-heavy art forms struggled to get the functioning computers and internet access important to the operation of their programs.

4. HOW TO EXPAND THE USE OF CURRENT EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY IN A YSO

Leadership must:

- **Ensure other YSO staff understand the purpose of high-end equipment purchases.** Leaders should be prepared to explain and manage staff reactions to the high-quality equipment purchased for YAI and explain its relationship to the framework for quality. YSOs may also think about ways to attract resources to improve the quality of equipment and technology available for other programs.
- **Identify ways to upgrade and increase equipment and supplies of other YSO programs, particularly other arts programs.** YSO leaders should assess the needs of other arts programs, as well as programs in other areas, and look for ways to address them.
- **Ensure IT infrastructure can support high-end technology.** One consideration when selecting a tech-heavy art form should be the YSO’s existing IT infrastructure and upgrades that may be needed to support it.
- **Ensure resources for upgrading equipment.** Another consideration when selecting a tech-heavy art form should be the cost of maintaining the equipment over time. Leadership should build equipment upgrades into long-term budgets.

Teaching artists must:

- **Consider the appropriate level of equipment.** Technology was helpful in engaging youth in YAI in the context of the Club. However, equipment that was too sophisticated frustrated participants and teaching artists. Some artists found it more engaging to start out with the “prosumer” level of equipment.
- **Be conscious of potential disparities between YAI equipment and equipment available elsewhere in the YSO.** Teaching artists may look for opportunities to utilize the YAI equipment for the YSO as a whole and to benefit other programs.

PRINCIPLE N° 10**PHYSICAL &
EMOTIONAL
SAFETY****PRINCIPLE 10**

Programs provide a physically and emotionally safe place for youth.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Artists with strong youth development skills establish emotional safety in YAI classes. Youth use tools safely and attempt challenging dance routines with adequate preparation and support.

FUNCTION: Engaging and retaining youth, particularly those that did not feel like they 'fit' in other Club spaces.

EXPANSION OF PRACTICES: YAI caused Clubs to re-examine and enhance emotional safety Club-wide.

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Overview: Safety, in YAI and the Club, mattered for artistic expression and program retention. Principle 10 attracted some youth to the program and helped to retain others. Some reported that YAI was a calm, safe space for them compared to the normal hustle and bustle of the Club. While YAI classes were not immune to teasing between tweens, artists generally addressed these interactions immediately and participants were clear that artists did not tolerate this behavior. Youth consistently reported feeling safer in YAI than in other Club settings outside of YAI, but artists' ability to maintain a safe space depended on the strength of their youth development skills. Clubs learned that emotional safety had to be ensured throughout the Club, not only in the YAI space. YAI highlighted safety challenges for arts-oriented tweens; as a result, Clubs increased their efforts to become safe havens. Two units engaged in Club-wide safety efforts to address negative youth interactions outside YAI as a result of reports from YAI tweens.

1. PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Creating emotional and physical safety in YAI required artists to have strong youth development skills. Physical safety issues arose related to tools, chemicals, and physically difficult activities. These characteristics of Principle 10 are described below.

Best-practice youth-development arts organizations attend to the need for physical safety and beyond, providing an environment of emotional safety as well. In the arts, emotional safety is particularly important, because young people are expressing their thoughts, feelings and experiences, many of which are deeply personal.

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Setting and maintaining safety norms in the classroom

required strong youth development skills. Not surprisingly, youth did not always follow class rules and sometimes teased or criticized each other. Twenty percent of youth reported being teased inside the YAI class, while 67% of teaching artists reported emotional safety issues requiring intervention in at least 50% of their classes. In addition, tensions between new and beginner students emerged regularly and had to be managed.

Teaching artists' ability to respond to these interactions was related to their youth development and group management skills. For example, in dance classes, artists had to create safe space for both tween boys and girls in a setting focused on the body. One teaching artist explained her approach to keeping the classroom safe:

Me being able to hold them accountable, but they hold themselves accountable... Really kind of standing my ground and making sure that they know that they [draw] that line between joking and what's not ok. Letting them know that I will take everything that they say seriously so that they need to be aware of what they're saying and what they're doing.

As mentioned earlier, teaching artists varied in their youth development skills and those with fewer of these skills were observed and reported by students to have less emotionally safe classrooms.

Teaching artists also had to manage issues including tool safety, chemical handling and disposal, and physical safety protocols. While there were few safety concerns in classes focused on computers, the sharp and hot tools used in fashion design and the chemicals and tools used in visual art posed a challenge. In dance, youth could pull muscles or sustain other injuries. One dance teaching artist began teaching acrobatic moves, due to youth interest, but these required hands-on assists and appropriate mats to cushion potential falls. Dance artists also insisted on stretching exercises at the beginning of class to mitigate any injuries. At least one teaching artist wished she had received first aid training to address minor injuries that occurred in her classroom.

2. ENGAGING YOUTH

Emotional safety in YAI helped recruit and retain tweens, especially those who hadn't found their niche in other Club spaces. These functions of Principle 10 are discussed on the following page.



Emotional safety in YAI and the Club was important for recruiting and retaining youth in YAI. Teaching artists, Club staff, and youth reported that emotional safety was one of the most important Principles influencing decisions to participate and stay in the program. Lack of emotional safety, in the Club as well as in YAI, prevented youth from trying YAI and could cause them to leave. For example, youth reported that boys were concerned about teasing if they participated in dance or fashion; consequently, the dance programs were dominated by girls. In addition, tweens sometimes discouraged the opposite gender from participating in other mixed-gender YAI programs. One artist explained why she decided to try gender-segregated groups:

I've separated the boys and girls...because I noticed that [when] there's a room full of girls and then the one boy shows up and the girls are like, "get out," the boy is like, "okay." I'm thinking maybe that separation will help the group to feel more unified.

The vast majority of participants felt that YAI was emotionally safe. In focus groups, youth reported that class norms allowed them to create art without fear of judgment:

[YAI] is my safe spot.

You can have your own opinion and no one will be snotty to you.

People won't judge you for what it looks like.

You can paint your feelings.



Youth from another Club said:

I like that we all get to show creativity in there and no one can judge anything.

[The teacher] is doing stuff, but he's also paying attention to every single person because he always says it's a safe environment and tells people to get out if they're going to be mean.

However, some youth reported that peer conflicts in the YAI classroom were contributing factors in their decision to stop participating in YAI.

The safety of YAI spaces particularly attracted youth who didn't fit in other Club spaces. Parents were particularly vocal about how YAI spaces welcomed children who had a hard time making friends or had been uninterested in activities like sports but appreciated YAI's 'alternative' activities. Two parents said:

My thoughts were—she can't dance! But I said you know what, if you want to do that, then I'm happy you are trying it out and excited. I was also surprised because she is very shy, so I was surprised that she was even entertaining the thought of dancing in front of other people.

It's hard to find other kids his age that would do something that he likes. [In] graphic arts he found kids his age that enjoyed what he enjoyed so... I think that's the main reason why he was able to make friends I guess.

Table 16 presents promising and innovative strategies YAI teaching artists and Club leadership used to ensure emotional safety in the YAI classes and Clubs and physical safety in the YAI classes.

TABLE 16

PRINCIPLE 10 (PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
ENSURING PHYSICAL SAFETY	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols and design are key to achieving physical safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Procure equipment that maximizes safety. + Begin class with group check-ins to review safety procedures.
ENSURING EMOTIONAL SAFETY	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols and design are key to achieving emotional safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Establish strict behavioral protocols (no disrespect, teasing, judging). + Teach constructive criticism. • Establish an emotionally safe environment in which to explore emotional issues through art. For example, at two sites, film classes created videos addressing bullying and trauma.
ENSURING CLUB-WIDE EMOTIONAL SAFETY	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the value of the arts in the Clubs also increased the emotional safety of YAI participants. Culminating events and other YAI activities that took place in the broader Club helped to shift other Club youth perceptions of the arts. For example, seeing the YAI film crew with their cameras filming other youth in the Club, or seeing a video of the dance team playing on a TV monitor in the Club, helped raise the status of the arts among other Club youth.

3. EXPANSION OF PRINCIPLE 10 IN THE YSO

Principle 10 was already a core tenet of the Club mission. Yet, as with other Principles, YAI highlighted areas where the Clubs could improve. One of those areas was the emotional safety of the Club overall.

Clubs needed to re-examine the level of emotional safety that existed Club-wide and take steps to address new safety challenges.

While YAI successfully created safe spaces for youth, emotional safety also had to extend beyond the YAI classroom to be meaningful. YAI participants experienced emotional safety challenges when youth outside the program looked into or entered their YAI classroom. In one dance class, for example, older youth gathered outside the room to watch. Youth reported feeling self-conscious with this audience for their rehearsals. As one youth described: "But I wish we could have our own dance studio—not just in the Club. Everybody stands in the doorways [and watches us and some of them make fun of us]."

Students would also distract YAI participants in another studio, near the snack and dinner area, by knocking on the doors and windows: "It's hard to concentrate because we have so many other people staring through the windows. So we need curtains, and fast....and they make insults. It's disgusting....like, 'Oh, the stuff is ugly.'"

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A third group found it problematic when youth from other classes cut through their room: "I don't like people cutting through because it feels like we're just chopped liver and they just go through."

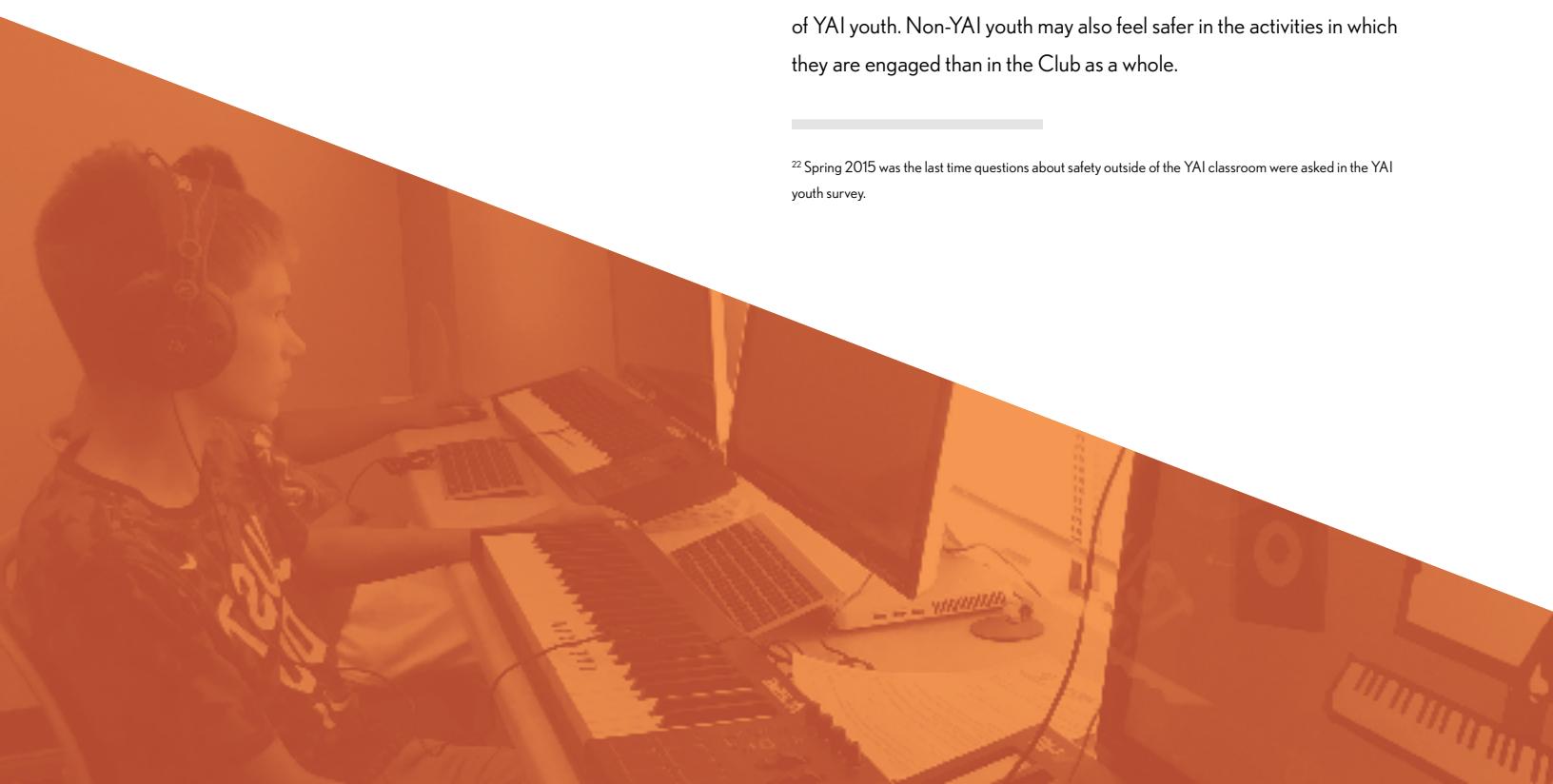
In addition, YAI youth consistently reported feeling safer in YAI than they did in the rest of the Club. In spring 2015,²² 97% of youth reported feeling safe inside of YAI compared to 71% in the Club. If these emotional safety norms were not consistent outside the classroom, it could undermine the sense of safety within YAI.

The fact that some youth reported a relative lack of emotional safety in non-YAI settings was news to Club leaders; as safe spaces are integral to the mission of youth-serving organizations, they took the issue very seriously. It may have been the case that high-quality arts programs required more emotional risk-taking and, as a result, required a higher degree of emotional safety than other Club activities. Several staff also noted the advantages YAI had compared to other Club programs in creating a safe space. These advantages included:

- A committed group of youth with whom the artist could develop relationships, as opposed to the changing, drop-in population managed in the rest of the Club;
- Smaller class sizes that allowed the artist to provide more one-on-one attention; and
- YAI artists had more longevity with the Club over time than the Club's typical part-time staff, which also allowed them to develop deeper relationships with youth.

It is important to note that these data only describe the Club experience of YAI youth. Non-YAI youth may also feel safer in the activities in which they are engaged than in the Club as a whole.

²² Spring 2015 was the last time questions about safety outside of the YAI classroom were asked in the YAI youth survey.



4. HOW TO EXPAND PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY PRACTICES IN A YSO

Leadership must:

- **Implement safety initiatives throughout the organization.** Prior to launching YAI, leaders should solicit and listen to youth experiences with emotional safety, as well as review organization-wide safety data to determine the need for additional safety efforts. At least one YAI Club reviewed their annual National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) data for a broader perspective on safety in the Club. In response, they held training for all staff on emotional and physical safety rules to ensure consistent enforcement of these norms.
- **Ensure teaching artists are properly trained in injury protocols.** Artists were interested in injury training or first aid.
- **Monitor and support artists struggle with classroom management.** Creating a safe environment required strong youth development skills. Artists' that struggled in this area were less able to keep the classroom emotionally safe. YAI liaisons and Unit Directors should provide not only training but regular in-classroom coaching for artists to develop classroom management skills so that they can maintain a safe classroom environment.
- **Foster YSO-wide valuing of the arts.** It was important for Club staff to convey to all youth that the arts were as cool and acceptable as other youth activities. Culminating events in the Club helped to foster acceptance of the arts among other youth.

Teaching artists must:

- **Be proactive about creating emotional and physical safety in the classroom by setting clear norms and procedures.** Artists should discuss expectations regarding acceptance and safety early and often and establish clear guidelines regarding participants' interactions with each other. In addition, artists should establish careful safety protocols for work with tools or physical activities that could cause injury.
- **Be vigilant about monitoring and addressing emotional and physical safety in their classroom.** Once rules are established, teaching artists should be vigilant about enforcing them. When artists were not able to pay attention to everything happening in a chaotic program environment, youth reported more experiences of teasing.
- **Work with Unit Directors to address safety issues for YAI youth which emerge in the rest of the YSO.** As artists become aware of youth experiencing teasing outside of the YAI classroom, they should bring their concerns to Unit Directors and work with them to address any challenges.

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF QUALITY: EXTERNAL VISIBILITY, SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION



05

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT TWO PRINCIPLES THAT ARE ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF HIGH-QUALITY ARTS PROGRAMS AND CAN INCREASE YAI'S VISIBILITY, SUPPORT, AND RECOGNITION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM AND CLUB. THESE INCLUDE:

- Principle 5: Culminating Events
- Principle 9: Community Engagement

Table 17 provides an overview of these external visibility, support, and recognition Principles.

The external-facing Principles, although present in earlier phases of the initiative, gained momentum and became more of a focus after programming had stabilized. They did not conflict with Club values or operations but expanded activities typical in other program areas into arts programming. Both Club leadership and teaching artists were responsible for implementing the external-facing Principles.

The chapter describes the ways in which Cross-Cutting Lesson 2 and 2a applied to these Principles, including the ways in which the Club had to expand existing practices for successful implementation of each of these two Essential Building Blocks. Each of the Principle sub-sections discusses:

- What the Principle looked like in a YSO;
- The function of the Principle in a YSO;
- Expansion of the YSO's existing practices; and
- How to expand YSO practices to implement the Principle.

Additionally, each Principle sub-section outlines promising implementation or alignment strategies. In some cases, implementation varied by art form; when it did, the findings can be found in pull-out boxes.

The Principles are presented in numerical order.

TABLE 17

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF QUALITY: EXTERNAL VISIBILITY AND SUPPORT

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE IN THE CLUB	FUNCTION	EXPANSIONS
PRINCIPLE N° 5 CULMINATING EVENTS	Art-form specific and cross-art form events that varied in size and were held in a variety of venues including, at the Club as well as in the larger community.	Creating external visibility to bring recognition to youth and visibility to YAI in the Club, with parents and in the community.	Clubs had to balance youth development goals with high expectations, limiting external performance and shows until youth were ready for them. Principle 5 was expanded to accommodate a variety of event types, including internal Club culminating events that provided a supportive and safe venue for beginners.
PRINCIPLE N° 9 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	New and strengthened partnerships with community arts organizations; shared responsibility between leaders and artists for partnerships.	Creating external visibility to position YAI for sustainability and generating external support and recognition for YAI youth.	YAI expanded Club relationships in the local arts community and deepened parent engagement efforts.

PRINCIPLE N° 5

CULMINATING EVENTS

PRINCIPLE 5

Programs culminate in high-quality public events with real audiences.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Art form-specific and cross-art form events that vary in size are held in a variety of venues, including at the Club and in the larger community.

FUNCTION: Creating external visibility for YAI to bring recognition to youth and the Clubs' arts programming.

EXPANSION OF PRACTICES: Clubs limited external performances and shows until youth were ready for them, but added internal Club culminating events that provided a supportive and safe venue for beginners.

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Overview: Culminating events in the arts were slow to begin, but instituting them led to buy-in from other youth, Club staff, and parents.

Culminating events were new to the Clubs and slow to develop as artists and Club staff considered what would constitute the best youth experience. However, towards the end of the reporting period, all Clubs and art forms were hosting a variety of culminating events for internal and external audiences multiple times per year. These events drew attention to YAI and provided opportunities for youth recognition. They also helped boost the status of the arts in the Club among non-YAI youth, staff, and parents, and they sparked the interest of the broader community. Teaching artists and Club staff worked to balance the youth development goal of including all youth in the event with the teaching artists' desire to ensure youth readiness and maintain high expectations. Ultimately, Principle 5 was expanded to meet these goals.

**1. CULMINATING EVENTS IN A YSO:
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE**

While Clubs attempted small culminating events early on, they gained momentum and clarity as the initiative matured. Clubs found it challenging to define a high-quality culminating event and eventually developed multiple types, including smaller form-specific events as well as larger cross-form events.

The exhibitions, performances or other capstone occasions in which young people's experiences culminate are often the most anticipated components of the best-practice OST arts programs. Such events give youth a specific goal to work toward...

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Clubs found culminating events to be the most challenging

Principle to define. Initially, YAI envisioned culminating events as a way to showcase participants' skill development at the end of each session; however, teaching artists and other YAI staff quickly realized that a canned schedule of events would not work, at least early on. Teaching artists needed to build relationships with participants, learn about their interests, and assess their background knowledge before planning culminating events. They quickly learned that YAI participants had very little arts exposure, and most were beginners. As a result, a significant amount of learning had to take place before a public culminating event was appropriate. Teaching artists worried that putting youth in front of an audience when they were not ready would turn them off from the art form. As a result, YAI did not hold many high-profile culminating events early on in the initiative. From the midpoint of the pilot, public culminating events gained momentum and importance.

Clubs found culminating events to be the most challenging

Principle to define. As the initiative evolved, Clubs grappled with the definition of a high-quality culminating event. Across sites, teaching artists had different ideas about what quality looked like in a culminating event. For some, large, fancy culminating events were an option, but they also felt that smaller, low-key events were just as meaningful for students to receive recognition for their work. Midway through the

initiative, teaching artists at two Clubs reported that the "high quality" aspect of culminating events was subjective, flexible, and should be open to interpretation—that the true importance of culminating events for participants was in the quality of the opportunity. These teaching artists believed that culminating events should include exposure to different opportunities, places and non-art specific skills, such as public speaking. Others reported that "high-quality" culminating events were those that successfully engaged students and presented art work professionally for community exposure, regardless of the objective quality of the work. Others felt that culminating events should include only high-quality skill levels and performances. Teaching artists noted that these events could take different forms, from dancing for residents of a nursing home to making a video to post on YouTube.

As the initiative evolved, there were two kinds of culminating events: cross-form and form-specific.

By the midpoint of the initiative, all Clubs had experimented with larger, joint culminating events, wherein youth from all art forms performed and displayed work together. These larger events typically occurred at partner organization venues, like theaters, and served as the end goal for a YAI session for all art forms. Each group of participants worked on a separate aspect of these larger events—dancers performed, while others created costumes and backgrounds or produced music and film.

In addition to these larger, joint culminating events, many art forms also hosted smaller, form-specific culminating events. These smaller events included CD and video release parties, Club film festivals, and dance performances at smaller venues. The extent to which artists could manage form-specific culminating events while also planning for the joint culminating event varied, and some technical art forms did not lend themselves to do both.

2. ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

One of the functions of Principle 5 was to increase the external visibility of YAI. Culminating events provided more recognition for YAI programs and participants, leading to greater Club buy-in and stronger community partnerships.

Culminating events within the Club provided visibility for YAI and recognition for youth, increasing overall Club buy-in. Culminating events that were designed primarily for Club members, staff, and parents, such as displays and performances at family nights, played an important role in increasing YAI's visibility within the Club—bolstering Club buy-in for the initiative and the arts and giving recognition to YAI participants. Club staff, parents and other youth had the opportunity to see participants' high-quality art work. This increased appreciation for the art form, promoted participant safety, and cultivated program recruitment. A few participants reported that their friends at the Club had more respect for them and the arts when they experienced a culminating event. In addition, YAI staff saw culminating events as a way to engage parents in the program, and they found that the events illuminated how YAI was different from typical Club programming.

Parents reported that attending a culminating event revealed what YAI was all about.



Culminating events also generated visibility outside of the Club and strengthened community engagement. At all sites, partner organizations such as theaters and art studios served as venues for culminating events. In some cases, community partners and Clubs held joint culminating event performances. However, even community partners not directly involved in the culminating event were impressed when they attended and saw the depth, professionalism, and quality of YAI participants' art work. This fueled their enthusiasm about further collaboration with the artists, participants, and Clubs. Culminating

events in YAI also exposed the community to the program and the accomplishments of participants. This led to an increased perception of the Club as a high-quality art skill-development provider and also related to YAI's sustainability, as the events expanded the program's visibility to potential donors.

Table 18 highlights some of the promising and innovative strategies that teaching artists, liaisons, and community partners used in YAI to make culminating events high quality and impactful for students and public audiences.

ART FORM DIFFERENCE

DIFFERING EVENT FORMATS

Teaching artists across sites noted the importance of different event formats for different art forms:

- Performance arts lend themselves to greater visibility. Dance artists performed at public events such as ribbon cuttings and Club fundraisers.
- Visual artists participated in festivals and art walks, and they produced community installations for local studios and businesses.

- Video and music artists held or participated in film festivals and CD release parties. They also produced music and videos for online publications, other YAI art forms, and Club events.
- Fashion designers participated in fashion shows and produced costumes for cross-form culminating events.

According to teaching artists, some art forms attracted more introverted youth whose needs could not be met with showcases or performances.

TABLE 18

PRINCIPLE 5 (CULMINATING EVENTS) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
BALANCING INCLUSION WITH HIGH-QUALITY CULMINATING EVENTS	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have more advanced dance students perform more sophisticated choreography. Hold beginner and advanced culminating events separately. Have more introverted students do camera work while more outgoing students narrate. Develop individual projects to showcase all skill levels.
ESTABLISHING CLUB STAFF SUPPORT FOR CULMINATING EVENTS	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop roles for Club staff and leadership. Hold culminating events for Club board and leadership, like a private music or movie showing.
ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY/FAMILY ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT	Unit Directors, Liaisons and Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan ways for parents and community members to participate and benefit. For example, one site organized a holiday photo shoot for family portraits.
ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PROVIDING VISIBILITY FOR YOUTH	All Leaders, Teaching Artist, Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community partners can provide venues and commissions for youth. For example, Freightliner, a trucking company, commissioned YAI youth to provide art for their driver's lounge. Engaging the media through invitations to "ribbon cutting ceremonies" for new art spaces or culminating events.
ENCOURAGING YOUTH LEARNING AND EXPOSURE	Teaching Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching artists can provide form-specific culminating events that can help youth gain exposure through competitions and similar events. For example, the fashion students participated in a fashion show.

3. EXPANSION OF PRINCIPLE 5 IN A YSO

Producing high-quality culminating events for the arts created new opportunities and visibility for Clubs but also stretched Clubs beyond accustomed practices.

Culminating events in the arts were new for the Club.

As youth development organizations, Clubs support the idea of culminating events. In fact, many Clubs regularly hosted parent nights or open houses to showcase Club activities. They also regularly hosted public sports competitions to highlight their athletic teams. But Principle 5 expanded the Club's thinking about these events for the arts and pushed their capacity to organize and execute large, public, arts-focused culminating events. Club leadership supported the notion of frequent public culminating events in order to promote the Club brand and YAI's sustainability. BGCA initially asked Clubs to host culminating events after every six-week program session, but some teaching artists felt a tension between ensuring high-quality work and meeting BGCA and Club leaders' expectations. Teaching artists were committed to holding large public events only when they were confident that the product would be showcasing the best work of adequately-prepared participants. This meant that public culminating events were not as frequent as desired or originally anticipated. Holding

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less frequent public culminating events afforded time for art forms to offer sequential skill-development classes that build up to a more complex finished product. At the same time, teaching artists developed ways of showcasing students' growth internally by holding interim performances and shows inside the Club as they were preparing for public events.

Across all three sites, getting students to practice and focus to ensure the high quality of the culminating event was a challenge for teaching artists. Some artists felt that holding frequent, high-quality culminating events required them to curb their own expectations of student work, pointing to a potential conflict between high expectations (Principle 4) and culminating events (Principle 5) in the Club setting. One artist said that, while he still held high expectations of his students, he had to "recognize that there is a difference between 'wow' for the Club and 'wow' for us as artists."

As a result, by the end of the pilot period, the concept of culminating events was expanded to include both high-profile, well-publicized community events and internal, small, or art-in-process events that were not widely publicized.

4. HOW TO EXPAND ARTS-FOCUSED CULMINATING EVENTS IN A YSO

Leadership must:

- **Support teaching artists' desire to provide youth with adequate preparation and practice time before holding high-quality, widely publicized culminating events.** While culminating events are central to YAI's publicity, leaders need to balance their push for quick and frequent events with the need to ensure that the teaching artists and youth are confident in their mastery of the necessary skills.
- **Manage requests for performances or work outside of regular culminating events.** As described in Principle 1 (Professional practicing artists), the teaching artists' skills were in high demand in Clubs. Club staff wanted to partner with YAI to produce artwork that would benefit the Club as a whole. These requests, when not aligned with current YAI projects, distracted teaching artists from their focus on the skill development of their participants. Similarly, YSO leadership should set boundaries for these requests so teaching artists are not pressured to guide participants beyond their skills or interests.
- **Communicate the importance of YSO staff support for culminating events.** Teaching artists in YAI often relied on other Club staff to support their culminating events. Support included attendance at the event, promotion of the event among youth or other staff, providing logistical support for the event, or even participating in performances. When Club staff did not support these events, youth felt disappointed.

Teaching artists must:

- **Identify strategies to include youth of varying skill levels.** YSOs hold inclusion as a fundamental value, and teaching artists in a YSO must hold this value as well. As such, teaching artists need to identify ways to include youth with minimal as well as advanced skills. Many teaching artists in YAI were very innovative in this respect, generating roles for participants of all skill sets.

PRINCIPLE N° 9

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PRINCIPLE 9

Programs strategically engage key stakeholders to create a network of visibility and support for both youth participants and the programs.

AT A GLANCE...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: New and strengthened partnerships with community arts organizations; shared responsibility between leaders and artists for partnerships.

FUNCTION: Creating external visibility to position YAI for sustainability and generating external support and recognition for YAI participants.

EXPANSION OF PRACTICES: YAI expanded Club relationships in the local arts community and deepened parent engagement efforts.

Overview: YAI expanded community partnerships and parent engagement by providing program support and visibility. Principle 9 calls for Clubs to develop partnerships with external stakeholders, including parents and community organizations, to support arts programming. Clubs already had community partnerships and some parent engagement efforts, but YAI expanded and deepened these efforts with community arts organizations. This section discusses Principle 9's implementation and its effects on the Clubs' community and parent partnership efforts.

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN A YSO: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Community engagement increased the visibility of YAI's work and positioned the Club as a more significant entity in the arts community, which could further YAI's sustainability. The most substantial partnerships for YAI were with arts organizations, who provided a variety of supports. However, YAI staff also reached out to businesses, nonprofits, and schools as venues for culminating events or for recruitment. Some debate existed about the division of responsibility for partnerships, given the teaching artists' workloads. However, Club leadership and teaching artists ultimately shared this responsibility. Media coverage of YAI gained momentum over the course of the initiative, but YAI's visibility remained limited.

Local community arts organizations were YAI's primary partners.

Over the course of the initiative, all three Clubs developed some connections with community arts organizations representing the various art forms in their program. The goals for these partnerships included:

Best-practice youth-organizations recognize the importance of family engagement, but they also cast a wider net of community supporters including health care, law enforcement, business, the media and the arts.

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- Providing community venues for culminating performances or showcases of youth artwork;
- Providing arts exposure opportunities through field trips;
- Providing master classes that could help youth further develop their artistic skills;
- Connecting YAI artists with art mentors;
- Identifying arts donors and other community funding sources;
- Serving as thought-partners for the YAI liaison, who may not have other arts experts to consult in the Club administration; and
- Creating a pipeline for further training for the most advanced youth.

Community arts organizations engaged with YAI for their own educational outreach efforts and to develop potential audiences for their work.

Clubs also engaged with corporate and university partners, who served a slightly different purpose for YAI. Like arts organization partners, corporate partners provided spaces for culminating events and art showcases. For example, one corporate partner commissioned YAI participants to install a mural in their employee cafeteria. An open house brought youth, parents, and

employees together to see students' artwork and presentations. Moreover, local colleges and universities were also key partners for YAI as the initiative evolved. For example, the dance program at one site partnered with a local university to expose youth to traveling dance companies. The other two Clubs also reached out to local four-year and technical colleges offering arts degree programs. In these partnerships, universities provided expertise in developing the YAI spaces, networks of alumni to support recruitment of teaching artists and again, exposure opportunities for youth.

School partnerships were useful to YAI for participant recruitment. However, Clubs varied in the strength and significance of their school partnerships. One Club used YAI to significantly deepen its relationship with local schools by bringing in YAI artists during lunch time to recruit. It also partnered with classroom art and physical education teachers to hold demonstration classes. Another Club explored a partnership with an alternative school to recruit youth to its digital music program, and a home-school network to recruit youth to their visual arts program.

Partnerships were developed by both leaders and teaching artists. Clubs differed in their beliefs about who should be responsible for developing community partnerships and eventually settled into a system of joint ownership between teaching artists and Club leadership.

A photograph of a woman in a dark tank top and light-colored pants performing a dance pose on a stage. She is in a dynamic pose with one leg extended back and arms raised. The background shows stage lights and equipment.

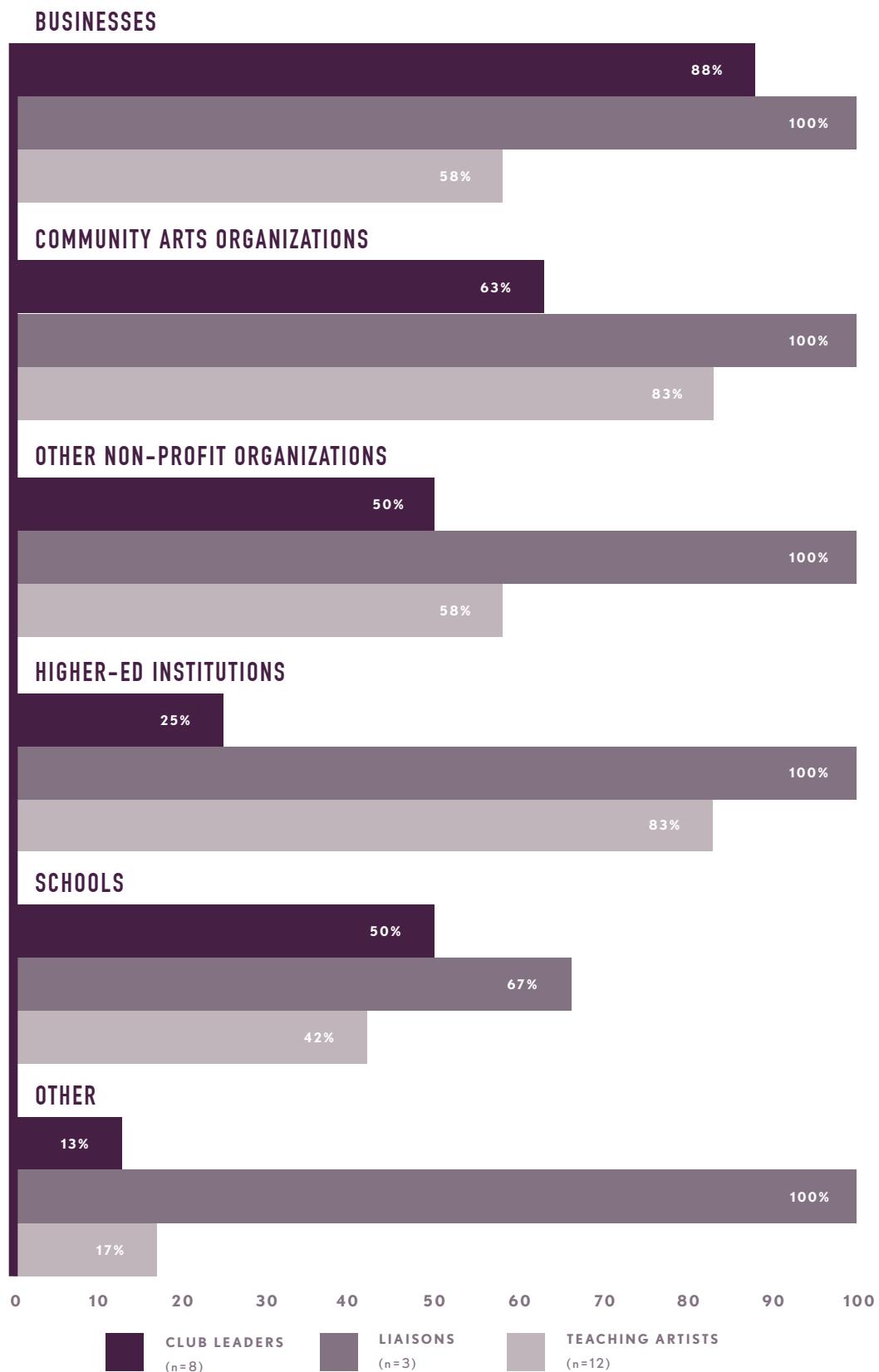
The liaison at one site felt that it was incredibly important for artists to own community partnerships, while the leadership at another Club wanted to limit their role in the event that artists left. Moreover, at another Club, leaders and artists questioned whether building community partnerships was a good use of the teaching artists' time. In some cases, the artist's presence in the community allowed for the Club to establish more partnerships; in others, there were concerns that artists might monopolize relationships.

Figure 12 displays the partnership activity reported by YAI liaisons, artists, and Club leaders in the spring of 2016. Generally, the data show that 100% of the Clubs' liaisons developed partnerships with multiple types of stakeholders, including schools, institutions of higher education, community arts organizations, businesses, and other nonprofit organizations. Teaching artists and Club leaders also reported forming partnerships with all these stakeholders, but not every teaching artist or leader developed them all. Among Club leaders, partnerships with businesses were more common than among teaching artists, and partnerships with arts organizations and institutions of higher education were more common targets for teaching artists than Club leaders. For example, one teaching artist used his connections with a local film festival to showcase student work, while another established partnerships with a local dance company in which she performed. Another brought his relationship with a partner organization to the Club to become a formal YAI partner. This artist had previously displayed work in the venue and wanted to partner with the organization to host a YAI event.

FIGURE 12

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY BY ROLE IN THE YAI INITIATIVE

PERCENT OF STAFF, BY ROLE, WHO HAVE PARTNERED WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, BY TYPE



YAI's visibility in the community improved with time, media exposure, and community engagement, but, at the end of the study period, remained limited. One facet of Principle 9 was local media exposure for YAI, and as the initiative evolved, Clubs worked to enhance their media visibility in the community. At the beginning of the initiative, two Clubs reported having press announcements and other events to introduce YAI to the local community. Shortly thereafter, the third Club was able to host a ribbon cutting event to officially launch YAI, and one art form was featured at a large community fundraising event. At least two Clubs' YAI programs were featured in local media outlets.

Clubs also worked to improve YAI's visibility in the community through social media, in various board meetings, and through networking. Some Clubs utilized Facebook to publicize culminating events, share photos, and highlight videos of youth performances. In one Club, the YAI liaison and a teaching artist were on various arts boards throughout the city, and they were intentional and strategic about getting the word out about YAI. However, despite efforts to enhance YAI's visibility and support in the community through partnerships, media activities, and culminating events, both YAI staff and community partners perceived awareness of YAI to be low in the general community. Many interviewees across Clubs highlighted the fact that Clubs are known for sports and after-school programs, not for high-quality arts programming.

2. ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Community engagement heightened Club visibility and positioned YAI for sustainability. Clubs found that community partnerships elevated Club arts programming and changed perception of YAI programming within the local arts community. This engagement allowed for increased exposure and also gave the Club a seat at the table with other community arts organizations. As one Club leader said:

Exposure in the community has gone well—more people are aware of the program and what it's about, particularly our dance component. [The dance instructor] has done a good job of connecting with other dance arts organizations in the community and partnering with them. They're coming in and doing programming in her studio on Friday.

Across sites, many stakeholders emphasized that community engagement was incredibly important for YAI sustainability efforts. Arts organizations helped Clubs understand the landscape for arts funding in the community, and corporate partners were able to make direct contributions or commission work.

Table 19 shows promising and innovative strategies used by teaching artists and Club leadership to build and strengthen community partnerships and family engagement.

ART FORM DIFFERENCE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Partnerships were more readily available for some art forms than others. For example, the technical art forms, particularly Digital Music and Fashion Design, did not have clear partnership opportunities in the communities in which they were offered. Dance and visual arts

were more likely to have access to organizations that offered exposure opportunities, showcase venues, or professional artists available to work with YAI artists and programs. However, these partnerships had to navigate potential competition for students or funding.

TABLE 19

PRINCIPLE 9 (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT) PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

GOAL	WHO	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AND GENERATING VISIBILITY FOR CLUB ARTS PROGRAMS	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Club hosted a Club-wide and community-wide culminating event centered on the theme of arts as a tool for community healing. The event involved other Club arts programs as well as community partners who performed alongside YAI youth. The involvement of a variety of organizations generated a large audience and media attention, with the Club as the central entity.
ENGAGING PARENTS	Teaching Artists and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media to engage parents. Clubs posted youth work and pre-event videos on social media to engage parents and advertise culminating events.

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3. EXPANSION OF PRINCIPLE 9 IN A YSO

Principle 9 created new opportunities for Clubs and deepened existing relationships with parents and new arts partners. These included:

- Opportunities to form new partnerships and deepen existing partnerships in the arts community; and
- Opportunities for increased parent engagement because YAI required a deeper level of commitment from youth.

Clubs needed to form new partnerships and deepen existing partnerships in the arts community. Some sites built upon existing partnerships, but YAI also positioned Clubs to engage new partners. Two Clubs already had many long-standing arts partnerships prior to YAI. In many cases, some of these partnerships had existed for over a decade. However, these partners reported that YAI made their relationship easier and more fruitful. Arts partners reported that they

appreciated teaching in YAI classes that weren't just drop-in classes, but where youth had a commitment to the art form. They also appreciated working in the new YAI spaces and having a professional artist with whom they could plan for and envision Club arts programming. At the same time, YAI allowed Clubs the opportunity to engage new community partners. For example, one Club that had many arts partners prior to YAI found that as the community learned about YAI, they were being invited to sit on new citywide arts committees and boards.

Clubs increased parent communication and engagement efforts because YAI required a deeper level of commitment from youth. Parent engagement was critical for YAI because of the need for an attendance commitment. However, parents did not always engage in the Club. Youth either walked to the Club on their own or were dropped off and picked up by the school bus and parents. Often, parents would drive by the Club and pick youth up without entering

the building. While some Clubs already had regular family nights prior to YAI, other Clubs struggled to engage parents. Struggles with parent engagement were reported early on, and parents reported not completely understanding how YAI was different than other Club programming.

Over time, YAI experienced some success engaging parents and developing new strategies through which to involve them in Club activities. Larger, community-based culminating events for YAI were particularly effective in this regard. These events allowed parents to see the quality of work that youth produced. Moreover, Clubs also focused on their interactions with parents through social media, where some teaching artists were able to cultivate strong parent engagement. One dance artist had strong and consistent parent engagement with her students' parents via Facebook and over text.

Once parents became engaged, they reported being pleased with YAI for three main reasons. First, they observed a high level of youth engagement. Second, they recognized YAI's high expectations. Third, parents were impressed with and frequently praised teaching artists. Almost all parents interviewed explicitly stated that they would be pleased to support their child's pursuit of a career in the arts.



4. HOW TO EXPAND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN A YSO

Leadership must:

- **Bring existing partnerships to the table.** Clubs had some existing community arts partnerships that they were able to bring to YAI for the teaching artist to leverage when expanding program opportunities.
- **Take the lead on building new high-level arts partnerships.** Club leaders were also able to initiate new high-level partnerships with leaders of other arts organizations, networks, and boards. These partnerships were not only a benefit to the YAI program; they also moved the Club into new arts spaces as partners learned more about YAI. The Club began to be seen as a significant provider of high-quality arts programming.
- **Include YAI in YSO-wide parent engagement efforts.** Some units developed Club-wide family events. As YAI matured, the Clubs began to include YAI in these events to showcase youth work. Liaisons worked with Unit Directors to ensure YAI was added to the agenda of these events and that YAI artists and youth were present.

Teaching artists must:

- **Bring their network of new arts partnerships to the YSO.** Artists brought new partnerships to the Club from their own professional networks. They also worked with the Club to ensure the partnership functioned under the umbrella of the Club, not their own brand.
- **Capitalize on culminating events for engaging parents and partners.** Culminating events were, in some cases, designed to build community engagement. They were held at partner venues and partners were invited to participate. Culminating events, as mentioned earlier, were often motivating for community partners and parents. They also helped to build awareness and support among parents and partners who were not familiar with YAI.



CONCLUSIONS AND REMAINING QUESTIONS

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The Youth Arts Initiative pilot demonstrated that the Boys & Girls Clubs of America could work with local affiliates to transplant the Ten Principles for Success from community arts organizations to a YSO setting. Multiple sources of data confirmed that the Principles, in all their complexity, were implemented to varying degrees across Clubs and across YAI art forms. Tweens were highly engaged, and the rate of their participation increased at a time when Clubs typically see a drop-off.

However, to facilitate implementation, Clubs made important adaptations to the Principles as well as to Club structures and practices to ensure that each Principle could work in a YSO setting.

YAI's emphasis on quality, as well as its focus on the arts,

pushed YSOs to adapt their structures and practices. YAI was also challenged by several features of YSOs which differed from community arts programs.

Table 20 displays the art-specific and quality tensions that emerged as a result of integrating YAI into a YSO.

A. YSO ART AND QUALITY TENSIONS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE YAI INITIATIVE

YAI's implementation faced two distinct tensions in the Club: Art-specific tensions (those that arose from YAI's art-specific focus) and those that resulted from YAI's focus on high quality (a component fueled by the Foundation's infusion of financial resources).

TABLE 20

ART-SPECIFIC AND QUALITY TENSIONS

YSO FEATURE	ART-SPECIFIC TENSION	QUALITY TENSION
HOLISTIC PROGRAMS AND MULTI-TIERED LEADERSHIP	Leaders in YSOs need to focus on and raise the value of the arts, which are often underappreciated, while not ignoring other program areas.	
DROP-IN/VOLUNTARY		The drop-in/voluntary nature of YSOs conflicts with YAI's attendance commitment because intentional skill development requires ongoing, consistent class attendance.
LIMITED AND MULTI-PURPOSE SPACES	YSOs' limited and multi-purpose spaces create tension with the need for dedicated space in the arts. High-quality arts programs need dedicated space so that in-process artwork can be left out and equipment is safe.	
FRONT-LINE STAFF WHO ARE GENERALISTS, MANY PART-TIME AND LOW WAGE		The YSO use of low-wage youth development generalists creates tension with YAI's requirement for professional subject-expert front-line staff.
VALUE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES		YSOs value youth input and leadership. YAI created the opportunity to expand these best practices in the YSO. YSOs believe in recognizing youth accomplishments. YAI created an opportunity to expand culminating events and provide youth visibility and recognition in the arts.
MULTIPLE PROGRAM OFFERINGS	YSOs offered a wide range of programs but arts were not always valued. High-quality art programming involves risk-taking to learn and master new skills, create original artwork, and perform/showcase personal artistic work. As a result, Clubs needed a higher level of emotional safety than was typical in the Club.	
LIMITED RESOURCES		YSOs operate in a policy context of limited resources. In YAI, staff, space, and equipment all require more resources than Clubs typically have available.

1. ART-SPECIFIC TENSIONS

The multi-focused nature of the Clubs created challenges for YAI as it endeavored to elevate and increase respect for the arts. Club leaders had to balance their focus on the arts with the needs of vested stakeholders in other program areas. YAI had to adapt its expectations of leadership; at the same time, leadership had to spend more time and attention on previously-neglected arts programming. By the end of the initiative, Club staff across all three sites achieved this balance while increasing the visibility and importance of the arts in their Club.

YAI's need for dedicated spaces conflicted with the Clubs' multi-purpose space operations and required other programs to relocate. Art programs, unlike other types of OST programs, have a particular functional need for dedicated spaces. Art programs also use supplies and equipment that require specialized training and cannot be shared with the general population. Sharing spaces with the Club population compromised YAI's ability to maintain high-quality equipment and supplies. Maintaining dedicated spaces for the arts conveyed their importance and increased their value, but this meant that Clubs had to relocate other programs due to space limitations.

The high-quality arts initiatives revealed the need for a greater level of emotional safety in the Club environment.

High-quality art programs require youth to take risks, so it was critically important for youth to feel emotionally safe. Youth reported that the YAI space felt safer than other Club spaces, but occasionally outside youth

teased YAI participants. While Clubs consider safety an important tenet of their programming, the YAI initiative, across Clubs, revealed the need for Clubs to reexamine the level of emotional safety youth were reporting in the Club as whole.

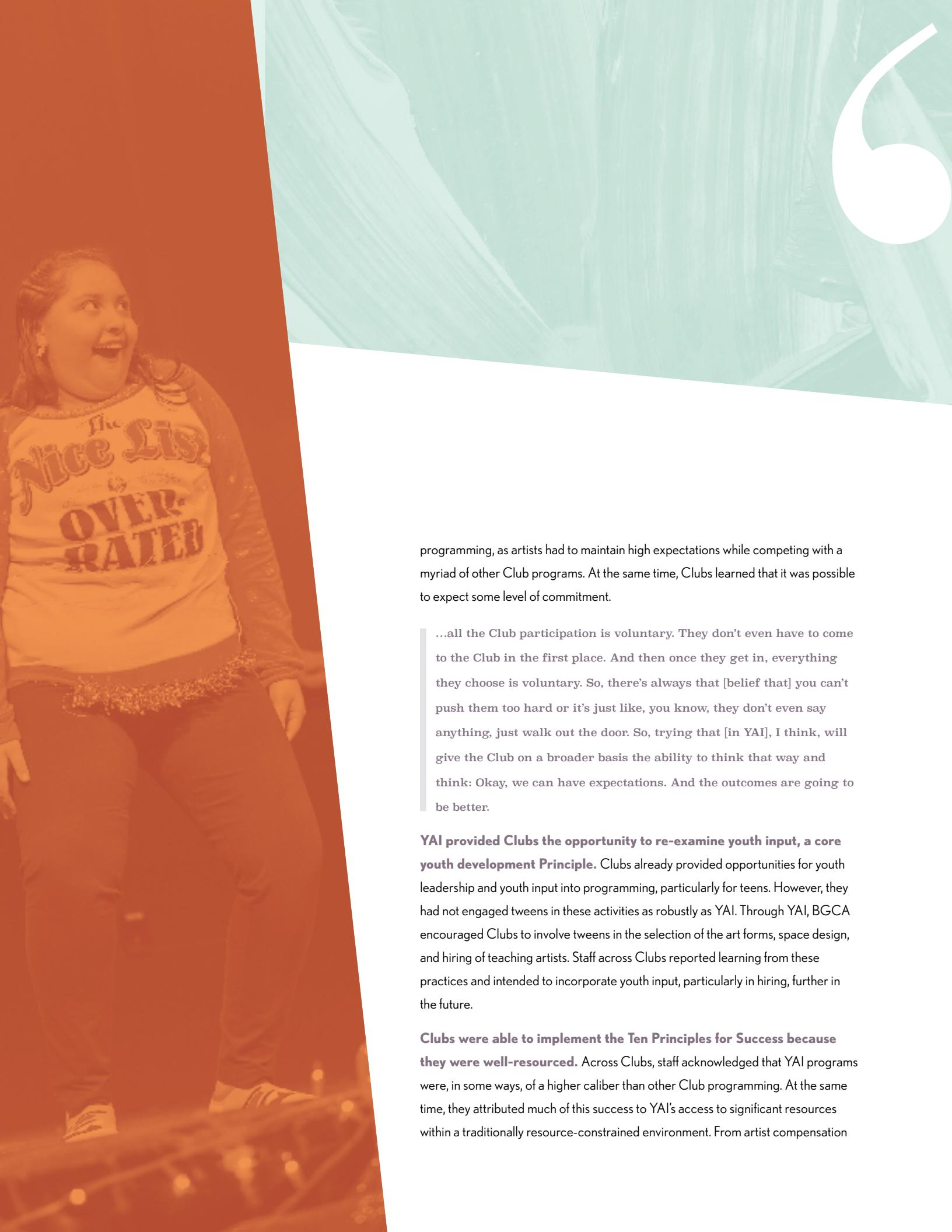
2. QUALITY TENSIONS

The utilization of professional, adequately compensated staff—the gold standard for quality in OST programs—created tensions in an environment where staff are typically generalists, rather than content experts, and most front-line staff are part-time, minimum wage workers. Clubs recognized the high caliber of professional teaching artists and wondered what impact similarly professional content experts might have in other program areas. At the same time, the introduction of a professional front-line staff person into the Club created unexpected tensions with staff and for the Club operations as a whole. Professional artists and Club staff had different demands and expectations regarding the degree of autonomy and flexibility they were afforded in their work. This required Clubs to adjust their expectations and employment practices.

The focus on intentional skill development—another hallmark of quality OST programs—created tensions for YAI programming operating within a voluntary drop-in context.

Participation in Club programming is typically voluntary due to Clubs' desire to keep young people off the street. However, YAI expected participants to commit to rigorous skill development for four hours every week. This created tensions for Club scheduling and holistic





programming, as artists had to maintain high expectations while competing with a myriad of other Club programs. At the same time, Clubs learned that it was possible to expect some level of commitment.

...all the Club participation is voluntary. They don't even have to come to the Club in the first place. And then once they get in, everything they choose is voluntary. So, there's always that [belief that] you can't push them too hard or it's just like, you know, they don't even say anything, just walk out the door. So, trying that [in YAI], I think, will give the Club on a broader basis the ability to think that way and think: Okay, we can have expectations. And the outcomes are going to be better.

YAI provided Clubs the opportunity to re-examine youth input, a core youth development Principle. Clubs already provided opportunities for youth leadership and youth input into programming, particularly for teens. However, they had not engaged tweens in these activities as robustly as YAI. Through YAI, BGCA encouraged Clubs to involve tweens in the selection of the art forms, space design, and hiring of teaching artists. Staff across Clubs reported learning from these practices and intended to incorporate youth input, particularly in hiring, further in the future.

Clubs were able to implement the Ten Principles for Success because they were well-resourced. Across Clubs, staff acknowledged that YAI programs were, in some ways, of a higher caliber than other Club programming. At the same time, they attributed much of this success to YAI's access to significant resources within a traditionally resource-constrained environment. From artist compensation

If we really want to be the premiere youth serving agency in the city, I think we have to be able to have something of this level for all aspects of programming.

UNIT DIRECTOR

to space renovation and equipment purchases, YAI stood out for having more resources than typical Club programming. While this level of resources expanded the Clubs' vision for quality programming, it also raised questions about sustainability.

Clubs reported that through YAI, they expanded their own thinking about best practices and quality programming in the arts. Across Clubs, leaders reported that YAI had resulted in increased attention and value paid to the arts. As one Club leader stated: "With the YAI project, there's a new enthusiasm around the arts program in general. Before, it was kind of arts and crafts, and the kids were in a room doing papier-mâché, versus [now kids are making] some serious art murals on our walls and going and performing in the community."

Another Club leader reported: "And I think you also have to appreciate the fact that now that you've got the kids hooked, you can't go back to Popsicle sticks and googly eyes."

Across Clubs, leaders and staff reflected on how the Ten Principles applied to other program areas. One Unit Director concluded: "If we really want to be the premiere youth serving agency in the city, I think we have to be able to have something of this level for all aspects of programming."

B. REMAINING QUESTIONS ABOUT YAI HEADING INTO WAVE II OF THE PILOT

While the Wave I pilot answered some fundamental questions about the ability of a YSO to implement YAI, many important questions remain:

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Is YAI sustainable? Ultimately, BGCA's goal is to ensure equitable access to the arts. To succeed, YAI must be at a cost per child that aligns with Club resources. While the robust resources Clubs received expanded their vision for quality programming, it also raised questions about sustainability. YAI's pilot was afforded generous financing with the goal of testing the ability of BGCA and its affiliates to create and implement art skill-development programs for tweens comparable to those implemented by exemplary after-school art education programs. The deep investments made by Wallace into the YAI pilot are not typical; Clubs usually program on much smaller budgets so they can serve as many youth as possible. As Clubs thought about sustaining the initiative after Wallace funding ended, they began to consider modifications to lower costs. However, it is unclear what modifications can be made to lower cost while also maintaining quality. BGCA will explore these trade-offs with the first wave of pilot Clubs in the final phase of their funding, and in the next phase of the initiative, BGCA will give pilot Clubs more flexibility in implementing YAI to see if the program can be replicated at a lower cost with similar outcomes. A study of the costs of these YAI approaches is expected in 2020; it

²³ Little, P., Wimer, C., & Weiss, H. B. (2008). After school programs in the 21st century: Their potential and what it takes to achieve it. Issues and Opportunities in Out of School-Time Evaluation: Issue 10. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project; Black, A. R., Somers, M. A., Doolittle, F., Unterman, R., & Grossman, J. B. (2009). The evaluation of enhanced academic instruction in after-school programs: Final report (NCEE 2009-4077). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, United States Department of Education.





will also document the compromises the Clubs had to make to achieve high-quality arts skill development at a cost that aligned with their budgets.

Is YAI scalable? YAI's scalability is contingent upon resources, capacity, and will. First, Clubs can only replicate YAI if it is offered at a per-child cost that aligns with their resources. Moving into the next wave of YAI sites, BGCA and Wallace will be exploring the viability of less resource-intensive options for YAI.

Second, while YAI's pilot was successful, it required that the Clubs make changes to their culture, structure, and operations to accommodate the Ten Principles. The extent to which other Clubs are able to and interested in making these types of changes is unknown. The Clubs chosen for participation in Wave I of the YAI pilot had the capacity to implement the Ten Principles, space that could be repurposed for arts programming, ample staff time to support the initiative, staff with the skills and abilities needed for forming partnerships with outside organizations and with parents, and they served a group of tweens who were interested in engaging in arts programming. Furthermore, each Club had an Executive Director who strongly believed in the value of the arts as a vehicle for positive youth development and embraced the changes that came with the Ten Principles. Other Clubs may struggle to bring this set of capacities and beliefs to the table, and may be unable to grow them without a significant infusion of resources.

What are the outcomes for youth? Wave I demonstrated that youth were engaged participants in YAI, and the Club as a whole, more frequently than other Club tweens. Research has found that higher levels of participation in OST programming are related to a variety of positive outcomes.²³ In addition, YAI had several key hallmarks of quality OST programming which have also been linked to positive outcomes for youth, including highly-qualified staff and intentional skill development. These markers suggest that YAI is likely to have positive benefits for its most active participants. A companion report, to be released in 2018, will share early evidence of benefits. Future research will follow YAI participants over time to more rigorously test whether these positive benefits are occurring and if they can be replicated. Ultimately, to aid in replication and scaling, it will be important to assess which of the Principles are most strongly related to positive participant outcomes.

What is the role of a national YSO in building and sustaining high-quality art skill development for its members?

Similar to other non-profit franchise models, BGCA provides legal, educational, and technical support to its affiliates. Additionally, BGCA develops and supports the implementation of programs across its network. BGCA has had great success scaling programs through the release of curricular materials and trainings. However, YAI was different. It required more intensive support from the national organization to help the three pilot Clubs understand how the Ten Principles are distinct from business as usual. BGCA used the pilot experience to develop tools and materials for replicating YAI, such as teaching artist assessments, observation protocols, and guidance for hiring a professional teaching artist. While these tools will be used in subsequent iterations of YAI, it is unknown whether these tools would facilitate a lighter touch approach to technical assistance than provided by BGCA in the pilot. As YAI expands, it will be important for BGCA to document its role in an effort to understand the necessary role of the national organization as it builds a movement-wide focus on high-quality artistic skill development for its members.

Do the Ten Principles work better with teens? This study reveals that the Ten Principles can be implemented with tweens, but that there are challenges maintaining high expectations and implementing youth input. We were not able to assess the extent to which implementation challenges related to the developmental differences between tweens, YAI's target population, and teens, the age group from which the principles were derived. For instance, it's possible that high expectations and youth input need to be generally modified for younger youth, but it is equally possible that these challenges resulted from YAI tweens' limited knowledge of the art form, rather than their age. Future research on YAI will explore its implementation with teens.

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What does it take for the Clubs to successfully catalyze youth and family interest in arts education?

While YAI was successful in recruiting and retaining youth in YAI, many of the youth were tweens who were regular Club attendees. It is still unclear what it will take for Clubs to become premiere arts education providers in their communities—places sought out by artistically-inclined youth. Further, *Something to Say* researchers found that parents in low-income communities do not often think of arts as a valuable pastime. They are unfamiliar with the ways that engagement in the arts can build their child's strengths and prepare them for a lucrative career and, therefore, are not predisposed to encourage artistic exploration. Through YAI, BGCA and The Wallace Foundation hope to catalyze parent interest in and support for arts education. So far, the research on YAI suggests that some parents of YAI participants are seeing the direct benefits of YAI on their children, but it remains to be seen if their attitude towards the arts changes more broadly.

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